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EUROPE AND THE YUGOSLAV CIVIL WAR

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1. INTRODUCTION.

The civil war in Yugoslavia is, after the Gulf war, the second important international crisis that the European Community (EC) countries have had to face in the last three years. And, as in the case of the Gulf war, their attitude has been characterized by sluggishness, uncertainty and differences in approach. Both were "predicted crises", with ample preliminary signs. In fact, in Yugoslavia they emerged gradually, but unmistakably over the course of several years.

The elements of the crisis were all present as early as 1987. An economic crisis was under way with an inflation rate over 100 per cent and a foreign debt over \$20 billion. The social crisis was evident in the series of strikes rocking Yugoslavia in March. Their clear anti-government trait made a high labor union official, Ivo Bilandijia, talk in terms of a "pre-revolutionary situation".¹

The widespread impression was that political crisis was just one step away, and that it would eventually entail the disintegration of the federation.

In 1988, while the economic situation was still very critical -- with a \$21 billion foreign debt, unemployment at 15 percent, an annual inflation rate at about 200 per cent, and over 800 strikes during the year -- the renaissance of Serbian nationalism injected the destabilizing factor of potential ethnic tensions and conflicts into the Yugoslav political situation. By October, the protests against alleged ethnic discrimination and economic hardship which had swept Yugoslavia since June had turned into a general assault on the communist political establishment. In a television address to the nation, President Raif Dizdarevic, warned that the crisis in Yugoslavia might lead to "extraordinary conditions" raising the possibility that a national state of emergency might be declared.²

By early 1989, the surge of Serbian nationalism led by Slobodan Milosevic³ had prompted the Croats to express their concerns and fears, re-opening Yugoslavia's oldest and most divisive problem, and had caused the military to issue a stern warning to politicians "pushing our Yugoslav ship toward the rocks of catastrophe".⁴

In July, 1990, in Belgrade, officials close to Milosevic bluntly underlined the Serbian position: if the federal structure of the State should collapse, Serbia would reassert claims to its historic borders, which extended in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Adriatic sea.⁵ It was a clear statement of purpose, almost a declaration of war, and an ominous anticipation of the events to come.

¹. Alessio Altichieri, "Il dramma jugoslavo in tre anni", *Corriere della Sera* (CS), 27 Marzo 1987, p. 6.

². Unofficial translators said that "extraordinary conditions" was the correct translation, but the official press agency Tanyug used the phrase "special situation" in the translation of the President's remarks. *The Washington Post* (WP), 10 October 1988, p. A1 and *The New York Times* (NYT), 10 October 1988, p. A1.

³. Slobodan Milosevic had become leader of the Serbian Communist Party in May 1988.

⁴. Henry Kamm, "Serb-Croat Rivalry is Again Shaking Yugoslavia", *NYT*, 30 January 1989, p. A2. Henry Kamm, "Yugoslav Military Weighs in With Warning to Politicians", *NYT*, 31 January 1989, p. A3.

⁵. Piero Benetazzo, "Le ondate nazionaliste affondano la Jugoslavia", *La Repubblica* (LR), 4 July 1990, p. 16.

In October, 1990, the Serbs living in Croatia declared the autonomy of the territory in which they constituted the majority of the population, while at the same time the armed skirmishes between the Serbs and the Croatian police spread among villages of the border areas. These new developments in Croatia were somewhat paralleled by the confrontation between the federal army and the government of Lubiana on the command and control responsibility of Slovenia's territorial defense. Still in October, Belgrade rejected the proposal for a Yugoslav confederation of sovereign republics prepared by the Slovenian and Croatian Presidents, Milan Kucan and Franjo Tudjman, and the federal Parliament decided to postpone until November the debate about the new constitutional structure of Yugoslavia, thus pushing the two republics further along the path of total independence. Speaking to the Parliament, Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic said: "National frictions and numerous confrontations have threatened to turn into open conflicts that would inevitably result in a civil war".⁶ That forecast was echoed by a CIA assessment predicting that Yugoslavia would break apart in 18 months and plunge into civil war.⁷

All these foreboding signs notwithstanding, the European Community still appeared officially uncommitted except for a generic concern and an equally generic appeal for unity, such as that expressed for the first time by Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis, on behalf of the EC, during a press conference in Vienna.⁸

In December 1990, the electoral victory of Milosevic seemed likely to accelerate the disintegration of the country, because it practically blocked any compromise solution which could take into account the autonomous aspirations of Slovenia and Croatia.⁹ These aspirations were substantiated by a referendum on sovereignty and independence held in Slovenia on December 23 and approved by 88.5 per cent of the voters.

In 1991, the Yugoslav crisis precipitated into a civil war. As Slovenes did in December 1990, Croats voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession on May 19 and, following Lubjiana's example, Croatia formally declared independence on June 25.

It was the last act of the Yugoslav drama which had gradually but unmistakably been unfolding since 1987. Since the summer of 1991, the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation has become a civil war, at first between Croatia and Serbia, and following the stabilization of their conflict in a semi-truce situation, it spilled over to Bosnia-Herzegovina where the Serbs have continued to pursue their territorial expansion plans.

2. THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CRISIS

The crisis developed and climaxed within an international framework characterized by several elements.

⁶. TIME (TM), 10 December 1990, p. 23.

⁷. Ibid.

⁸. Ettore Petta, "Stretta finale sul futuro della Jugoslavia", CS, 17 October 1990, p. 5.

⁹. For an analysis of the Serbian vote see: Blaine Harden, Serbia Vote: A Harbinger of Dissolution?, International Herald Tribune (IHT), 15-16 December 1990, p. 11.

(i) The progressive erosion of the legitimation of the Communist regimes in the East and their eventual collapse, which also weakened the ideological and political legitimation of the Yugoslav regime.

(ii) The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This development put an end to the "threat from the East" which was an element of concern and cohesion capable of capping and constraining the emergence of nationalist tendencies.¹⁰

(iii) The disappearance of the confrontational attitudes that had been assumed by the two superpowers and the end of the ideological bipolarity of the international scene. The new climate of cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union when confronting regional contingencies -- quite evident during the Gulf crisis -- de-emphasized the importance of the non-aligned movement and the role of Yugoslavia, a leading actor among the non-aligned countries.

(iv) From August 1990-February 1991 the international community (particularly the United States and the European countries) concentrated attention and efforts first on the resolution of the Gulf crisis and then on fighting the coalition war against Iraq.

(v) Though indirectly, the crisis was influenced by the August 1991 failed coup in the Soviet Union.

(vi) While the United States had taken the lead in the Gulf, it has been absent from the management effort in Yugoslavia, particularly in the initial phases of the crisis, leaving Europe on the front line.

3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRISIS

The crisis had its roots not only in the deterioration of the political, economic and social situation since the mid-eighties, but also in widespread feelings of reborn national and ethnic identities and deep-seated sentiments of fear and hatred linked to memories of WWII events.

As a domestic crisis, it was particularly difficult to manage because of the fine line separating the international search for a diplomatic solution -- and the definition of the scope and latitude of international action -- from a policy of interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. The task was made even more difficult by the explosive mix of the prevailing ethnic and nationalistic factors, economic failure, social unrest and political de-legitimation of the communist regime. The lack of appreciation of the weight of the ethnic and nationalistic factors was crucial in 1989 when support for the initially successful economic policy of the new premier, Ante Markovic, was considered sufficient to stem the tide of further political destabilization. In fact, the popular dissatisfaction with the catastrophic management of the economy assumed nationalistic overtones with the richer republics of the north complaining about the loss of wealth they could have created and the poorer republics of the south complaining about their past and present unfair share of national resources.¹¹

¹⁰. On this point see the interview with the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, Budimir Loncar, in the Italian daily La Repubblica, 24-25 September 1989, p. 12.

¹¹. In summer 1989, the federal premier Ante Markovic was openly accused by Serbia of favoring Croatia with his

The crisis was also difficult to manage because of its potential destabilizing effects even outside the Balkan region, as it could set a precedent for similar situations in the Soviet Union and in Europe. It is significant that the pre-coup attitude of the Soviet Union was very decisively in favor of maintaining Yugoslav national integrity, at a time when separatist forces were jeopardizing the Union.¹² President Gorbachev warned against any interference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs and about the possibility that a civil war could eventually spread beyond Yugoslav borders. The initial attitudes of many European countries (Spain, Italy, Romania, the United Kingdom, France, Greece and Czechoslovakia) toward the Yugoslav crisis were conditioned by the same concern.

The U.S. initial, conscious choice of letting the European institutions take the lead, without opting for total neglect, and after having clearly stated a preference for the maintenance of a unified Yugoslavia,¹³ was presumably made on the basis of the following factors.

(i) It can be argued that in a polarized world the American reaction would have been totally different. When the Soviet influence and threat were the focus of the lens through which the United States viewed any regional crisis, the potential disintegration of Yugoslavia would have prompted a different reaction. The prospect that the Soviets could gain strategic and political advantages would have sounded the alarm and provided a strong rationale for action. In the aftermath of the drastic changes in the East, and particularly after the failed coup and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the American perspective was bound to be different and the Yugoslav crisis was not seen as having an effect on vital American interests. In fact, in accordance with the August 1990 Colorado strategy -- i.e. the new conceptualization of future American strategy -- regional contingencies were to be more selectively assessed, considering the process of reform in the former Soviet Union and the significant decline of the Soviet threat.

(ii) Moreover, after being the main actor in shaping the anti-Iraq coalition, providing the strongest military force and leading the war to liberate Kuwait, the United States felt that in the Yugoslav case it was time to delegate the main role in crisis management to Europe.

(iii) Finally, another element determining the U.S. policy toward the Yugoslav crisis included the bleak American economic situation and the widespread public feeling that the United States had been giving too much attention to foreign policy while neglecting the real needs of American society.

4. THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

I do not intend to go through the different events, which tragically punctuated the civil war, and then put them in relation to the EC's actions. I would like, instead, to outline the most

economic program.

¹². On the similarity of the Soviet and Yugoslav situation in March 1988 on the eve of Gorbachev's five day visit to Yugoslavia, see Jackson Diehl, "Yugoslavia is Lesson in Ethnic Conflicts for Gorbachev", WP, 13 March 1988, p. A29.

¹³. On June 1991, American Secretary of State Jim Baker made it clear to Croatia and Slovenia that the United States would not recognize their unilateral secession from Yugoslav federation, and that they could not count on American economic assistance.

significant elements, both positive and negative, which have characterized the EC role throughout the course of the crisis.

To facilitate the analysis, I have subdivided the crisis into four main periods: the first, from June 25, when the Parliaments of Slovenia and Croatia adopted declarations of independence (a clear act of secession) to October 8, 1991, marking the end of the three-month freeze on further steps toward independence agreed upon by Slovenia and Croatia and the federal authorities in Brioni in July; the second, from October 1991 to January 15, 1992, the day the EC finally recognized the independence of the two republics; the third, from January 15 to 31 August 1992, a period in which a certain stabilization in the conflict between Croatia and Serbia was paralleled by the spread of the war to Bosnia-Herzegovina; the fourth, from the London Conference on Yugoslavia to January 1993.

The EC was ill-prepared to confront the crisis, even though it had developed over the course of several years, its military outcome (the civil war between Croatia and Serbia) was largely predictable, and Yugoslavia's fate is geostrategically and geopolitically important for European security.

First, while the Yugoslav crisis was progressing toward its violent climax, the EC was concentrating its attention and concern on three events directly and indirectly affecting European security: (i) the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the uncertain movement of the Central-Eastern countries toward democracy and a market economy; (ii) the process of German reunification since November 1989; and (iii) the Gulf crisis: from August 1990 to January 1991, the EC was divided on the response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and then forcefully united by Saddam Hussein's intransigence and the beginning of the coalition war against Iraq.

Second, many EC countries strongly favored the maintenance of a unified Yugoslavia, even though this attitude changed, in parallel with the worsening of the crisis, from the simple support of the status quo to a more complex position envisioning the possibility of a different structure for the Yugoslav state. They felt that the breakdown of the Yugoslav federation would establish a dangerous precedent, a feeling shared by other European countries, the Soviet Union included. This attitude, which shaped EC diplomacy until it was overtaken by the events, in fact underestimated the force of national and ethnic factors and overestimated the political cohesive effect of economic recovery, however slow.

Third, the EC operated on the incorrect assumption that the success of the economic program initiated by Prime Minister Ante Markovic would eventually contain independentist tendencies. This was coupled with another incorrect assumption -- that the EC had true economic leverage with which to influence Yugoslavia's internal developments.

5. 25 JUNE - 8 OCTOBER 1991. THE INITIAL EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

As mentioned above, it can be argued that the EC did not really and seriously address the Yugoslav situation before the Croatian and Slovenian declarations of independence on June 25, 1991.

From that date to the end of what I have defined as the first period of the crisis, the characteristics of the EC response were as follows:

(i) The EC approach was limited to economic pressure and political mediation. This type of approach was to be basically maintained throughout the course of the crisis, even though it was evidently inadequate to cope with the situation, or to offer real prospects of success.

(ii) As early as the end of June, cracks started to appear in the façade of the seemingly uniform EC position: differences in the appreciation of the crisis, diversity in the rapidity to react to the changing political and military situation on the ground, diverging repercussions of domestic policy factors on foreign policy decisions.

Germany was the first to move away from a policy aimed at preserving Yugoslavia's unity and territorial integrity to a more pragmatic approach that underlined the right of self-determination and the need to look for new forms of institutional structure. Germany was also the first to call on the EC to halt aid to the Yugoslav federal government if force was used,¹⁴ to propose an investigation of the crisis using the recently approved security procedures of the CSCE, and to threaten Belgrade with ending all German aid if it sent troops against Slovenia and Croatia.¹⁵ On July 5, in The Hague, when the EC Council decided on an arms embargo and on suspending about \$ 1 billion in economic assistance to Yugoslavia, Germany was ready to stress its own point of view. The German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher declared that the decision should be interpreted as meaning that if the federal army continued its military operations, the EC would immediately examine the possibility of recognizing Slovenia and Croatia¹⁶ -- a position unlikely to be shared by all EC partners. Finally, Germany was the first to call for economic sanctions against Serbia.

As for the French position, Foreign Minister Roland Dumas first mentioned the possibility of sending a European force to Yugoslavia as early as July 24, thus adding another subject, which soon proved to be controversial and divisive, to the EC crisis management agenda.

(iii) There was an early European attempt to involve the CSCE, at first by the WEU with the declaration on Yugoslavia adopted in Vianden on June 27, then by the EC with its support to Austria's use of the emergency mechanism¹⁷ for calling the first emergency meeting of the CSCE Council -- which was held in Prague on July 3-5. At the meeting, the high committee of the CSCE mechanism endorsed a decision to send EC observers to Yugoslavia.

(iv) The EC broker role led to limited and uncertain results. On its third attempt, the EC was able to mediate an agreement between Slovenia, Croatia and the Federal authorities (reached in Brioni, on July 7),¹⁸ which served to defuse the situation in Slovenia, but which proved insufficient for a long-lasting cease-fire in Croatia.

The monitoring mission of the unarmed, military and civilian EC observers was more significant because of its good intention (a tangible sign of the EC readiness to assume concrete responsibility and contribute to the management of the crisis) than because of its effectiveness. In fact, the main assumption on which the mission was based -- that the cease-fire would hold and

¹⁴. The German proposal to suspend a new five-year aid program of \$920 million in loans and credits was rejected by the other EC partners. Tom Redburn, "EC Sends Ministers to Yugoslavia in Effort to Ease Crisis", IHT, 29-30 June 1991, p. 5.

¹⁵. Stephen Kinzer, "Kohl Warns Belgrade On Action in Slovenia", IHT, 2 July 1991, p. 3.

¹⁶. William Drozdiak, "EC Halts Arms Sale and Aid to Yugoslavia", IHT, 6-7 July 1991, p. 1.

¹⁷. Any CSCE State affected or threatened by a dispute may call a crisis meeting of the CSCE Council if supported by 12 other States. The Arms Control Reporter, *ibid.*, 7-91, p. 402.B.280.11.

¹⁸. For the text of the Brioni agreement see: Europe, Documents, n. 1725, 16 July 1991.

be respected -- was never fully met.¹⁹ A memorandum was signed at the end of August on the extension to Croatia of the EC monitoring mission and the increase of the number of the EC observers from 50 to 200. The first five EC observers, however, were able to deploy to Osijek only after the opening of the peace conference.²⁰

By the same token, the August 27 EC peace plan may be considered a success because it was finally accepted and signed by Croatia and Serbia, thus clearing the way to the peace conference which eventually opened in The Hague on September 7. However, it turned out to be a very limited and short-lasting success as the truce was repeatedly violated and the fighting went on unabated in Croatia. The same can be said of the ceasefire agreement brokered by Lord Carrington at Igalo on September 17.

(v) The impression was that the EC was always uncertain and late on deciding how and when to use the political and economic leverage at its disposal (which was not very significant indeed) and this attitude appeared to be mainly the result of the major differences among the Twelve. The fact that during their meeting in the Netherlands on early October, the EC Ministers were still considering trade sanctions, an oil embargo or an arms blockade as measures to be taken later if the conflict continued was a good example of the very slow pace of EC diplomacy and also a sign of lack of appreciation of the seriousness of the crisis.²¹ And the EC decision to delay carrying out sanctions against Yugoslavia to allow the EC monitors more time to arrange a new cease-fire -- after seven cease-fires were broken -- was an evident indication that the EC still insisted on pursuing a diplomatic course already proven to be a failure.²²

On the other hand, it was certainly difficult for the EC to sustain a brokerage role between two parties who had little intention of seriously looking for a diplomatic end to the war, particularly when the already weak EC political tools were not supported by a willingness to use military instruments.

(vi) Another element of the EC response in this initial period of the crisis concerned the possibility of sending a European buffer force to Yugoslavia. The issue, first raised by The Netherlands, and quickly supported by France and Germany, was bound to add another element of division within the EC.

It can be argued that France and Germany made a mistake by publicizing their common call and support for a European buffer force for Yugoslavia, as they should not have ignored the practical limits of EC power.²³ The proposal was politically very ambiguous, considering the different diplomatic positions of Bonn and Paris on the crisis, and the stated German willingness

¹⁹. As of early August, the EC monitors were unable to operate in Croatia and even when they finally arrived in Croatia under the terms of the EC-sponsored peace agreement signed by the warring parties on September 2, the fighting was so intense as to prevent them from carrying out their mandate of monitoring cease-fire violations.

²⁰. At the end of September, only 83 of the 200 EC observers sent to Yugoslavia were considered "operative". The remaining were not in a position to perform their mission because of the fighting. See Europe, n. 5572, 21 September 1991, p. 4.

²¹. The threat of economic sanctions were formalized at the meeting of the EC Foreign Ministers in Haarzuilens, near Utrecht on October 6. At the meeting, the Spanish Foreign Minister, Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, interpreting the basic European position, said: "We must make them realize that if they do not respect a cease-fire, the EC will take action". A very odd declaration, considering that the war had been raging since June, several cease-fires had already been broken (including that agreed upon on October 4 in the framework of The Hague conference), and there were no prospects of Serbian and Croatian willingness to compromise. See IHT, 7 October 1991, p. 1, and Europe, n. 5583, 7/8 October 1991, p. 5.

²². IHT, 9 October 1991, p. 1, and Europe n. 5584, 9 October 1991, p. 3.

²³. The call for a European force was one of the points of the Mitterrand-Kohl declaration on Yugoslavia approved in Berlin on September 19.

to provide only logistic support, since German troops could not be sent outside the NATO area for constitutional reasons. The proposal was also militarily unfeasible, unless the EC was willing and ready to accept high military risks -- a very unlikely prospect indeed. The lack of credibility and feasibility of the Franco-German initiative was openly exposed when the EC foreign ministers decided against a European buffer force for Yugoslavia. None of the military options outlined by the WEU experts was considered feasible and the persisting, sharp divisions among the Nine and the Twelve eventually defeated the idea entirely.²⁴ It can be argued that the publicity given to the proposal was detrimental to the diplomatic effort conducted by the EC through the peace conference. It directly affected the responses of Croatia and Serbia, causing them to stiffen their respective positions, and it indirectly incremented the pace of the fighting since both parties wanted to reap maximum advantages on the ground before the expected stalemate imposed by EC intervention. It can also be argued that the Franco-German bid to send an EC force to Yugoslavia was an element of the political play conducted by the two countries considering, on the one hand, their internal political situations and, on the other hand, their long-term policy with respect to the eventual EC and CSCE security roles vis-à-vis that of NATO. Moreover, the bid could be seen as an intentional Franco-German attempt at outlining the need for a closer EC cooperation in view of the Maastricht summit in December. Finally, it could be interpreted as a French attempt to force Germany into a more coordinated policy, and out of a "cavalier seul" role in the Yugoslav crisis - among the Twelve, Germany was the greatest advocate of the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia.

The main elements of the political and military situation at the end of the first period were as follows: (i) a sharp escalation of the civil war, with the federal armed forces stepping up their biggest offensive against Croatia since the start of the fighting in June; (ii) the historical city of Dubrovnik being bombed by land, air and sea; (iii) more than one third of Croatian territory under the control of Serbian irregulars and the federal army, which had long ceased to be a neutral force; (iv) the Serbs having seized effective power in Belgrade -- a move which amounted to a "coup d'état"; (v) the impasse of the EC sponsored peace conference and an EC warning to Yugoslavia of more economic sanctions; (vi) the deployment of only 90 of the 200 authorized EC observers to Yugoslavia because of war; (vii) the inability of the EC observers to monitor the cease-fires effectively.

6. 8 OCTOBER 1991 - 15 JANUARY 1992. THE FURTHER SHAPING OF THE EUROPEAN RESPONSE

On October 8, the vote of the Croatian and Slovenian Parliaments formally activated the June declaration of independence frozen by the Brioni agreement, thus formally ending the Yugoslav federation and opening a new phase of the crisis.

In this period, some elements of the EC policy may be given contradictory interpretations, the same way a glass partially filled can be rightly defined as half full or half empty depending on the perceptions of the viewer.

The EC peace plan -- revised after the first draft was rejected by Serbia -- was a comprehensive attempt to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

²⁴. After debating the WEU report outlining four different military options for an EC peacekeeping force, the EC Foreign and Defense Ministers meeting in Brussels on September 30 postponed any decisions on sending European troops to Yugoslavia. See "European Put Off Vote On Force to Yugoslavia", IHT, 1 October 1991, p. 2.

- It pragmatically considered that Yugoslavia could only be held together through the bonds of a loose confederation of sovereign republics.
- It stressed that the internal borders could not be changed by force.
- It considered the rights of ethnic minorities with proposals addressing the real issues at the root of the conflict.
- It was backed by the threat of economic sanctions against those republics which refused to negotiate on the basis of the EC project.
- It appealed to the CSCE and the UN to support the EC efforts, if necessary by other restrictive measures.

By the same token, the peace conference was a honest effort to gather the major actors of the crisis around a negotiating table and to try to broker a solution through a flurry of diplomatic activity conducted by the President of the EC Council and Lord Carrington, the chairman of the conference. As noted by Michael Brenner, "they stressed their mandate to the limit in pressing the Yugoslav combatants with a mix of persuasion, cajolery and threat".²⁵

On the other hand, the conference -- convened, suspended, re-convened several times -- proved to be a failure. Thus, it could be argued that insisting on the conference as the only true element of the EC policy when it was clear that it was leading nowhere, was bound to tarnish the EC image, send wrong signals about the commitments made in Maastricht, and eliminate any further prospect of playing a significant role in shaping the new security arrangements in a post-Cold War Europe.

It could also be argued that there was little sense for the EC to persist in a brokerage role between two parties -- one of which clearly intended to pursue its own objective of territorial expansion for the establishment of a "Greater Serbia" -- without being willing and able to make timely use of all the political, economic and military leverages which were available, at least potentially.

Finally, the several cease-fires, consistently disregarded soon after they were signed, could be viewed not as a sign of readiness to accept the logic that the fighting must stop before anything else, but as a way for the warring parties to gain the time needed for the operational and logistic re-organization of their military forces.

The same type of contradictory assessment could be made regarding the EC decision to apply economic sanctions to the Yugoslavia.²⁶

The restrictive economic measures may be considered a strong signal and a tool capable of putting enough pressure on Serbia, and convincing Milosevic to negotiate -- particularly because "positive measures" (i.e the suspension of the sanctions), were later applied to Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁷

²⁵. Michael Brenner, "The EC in Yugoslavia: a Debut Performance", *Strategic Studies*, January 1992, p.14.

²⁶. On the EC declaration on Yugoslavia, and the details of the restrictive economic measures, see *Europe*, n. 5606, 9 November 1991, p. 3, and *Europe*, n. 5607, 12-13 November 1991, p. 5. See also: Michael Evans, "EC imposes sanctions on Yugoslavia", *The Times*, 9 November 1991, p. 20; Pietro Sormani, "I Dodici puniscono la Yugoslavia", *CS*, 9 November 1991, p. 3; David Osborne, "EC starts sanctions against Yugoslavia", *The Independent*, 9 November 1991, p. 12; *LM*, 9 November 1991, p. 3. Alan Riding, "EC Imposes Sanctions on Yugoslavia", *IHT*, 9-10 November 1991, p. 1.

²⁷. The decision to make a distinction among the Yugoslav republics on the basis of their readiness to cooperate for a

On the other hand, there are many reasons for which the sanctions may be considered a very weak weapon.²⁸ First, they were applied too late.²⁹ Second, it took one month from the time the EC decision for sanctions was formalized to the time they were finally adopted, a period which diluted their impact. Third, it was evident that their implementation was not an easy task, particularly because the EC decided on selective sanctions. Fourth, they suffered from the typical handicap of all economic restrictions, i.e. the possibility of circumvention, a possibility which in the case of Serbia appeared easy.

During the period under consideration, there were four other significant issues directly linked to EC policy: the growing role of the United Nations in the Yugoslav crisis; the attempts of the WEU to take action, at least in the humanitarian field; the strong German advocacy of the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia; the issue of a European interposition force.

a. The growing role of the UN

The EC had already appealed to the UN in August 1991, and this had been seen by many commentators as the symbol of Europe's failure in the management of the crisis.³⁰ In early November, Serbia caught everybody by surprise by asking the Security Council to send a UN peacekeeping force to Yugoslavia. It was an obvious move aimed at the deployment of UN troops along the line of the actual military front on the ground, as this would amount to an indirect international recognition of Serbia's territorial gains. To duplicate the situation in Cyprus, where the UN forces are still deployed after 28 years, would certainly have been in Serbia's interest. But it was also a telling element of the Serbian attitude toward the EC peace initiatives, and thus a blow to Europe's role in the crisis. By mid November Croatia also asked for UN intervention and by the end of the month the UN special envoy, former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, announced that through his mediation an agreement was reached in Geneva between President Tudjman and President Milosevic and the federal Minister of Defense, General Kadijevic, for a cease-fire (the fourteenth)³¹ and the acceptance of a "blue helmet" contingent as an interposition force. From that moment, the role played by the EC, excluding the issue of recognition, became secondary to and supportive of the UN action, and marginal with respect to the developments of the Yugoslav drama. The Hague conference was reconvened on December 9, after a break of more than a month. But little was expected to come out of the talks, and the EC officials themselves described the new session as a stock-taking exercise.³²

b. The WEU humanitarian action

diplomatic solution of the crisis was taken by the EC Council in Brussels on December 2, 1991. It was not an easy decision and there were conflicts among the Twelve culminating with the abstention of Greece. Europe, n. 5621, 2-3 December 1991, p. 6.

²⁸. The day before the EC decided on the sanctions, the federal armed forces launched a new, large offensive against Croatia. LM, 9 November 1991, p. 3.

²⁹. The possibility of imposing economic sanctions was considered, but rejected at the emergency session of the EC Foreign Ministers in The Hague on August 6, 1991.

³⁰. For the most common interpretation of the EC decision as reported in the Italian press, see Franco Venturini, "I Dodici in Serie B", CS, 7 August 1991, p. 1.

³¹. Actually, the November 24 truce was violated daily by both sides. There was only a lull in the fighting. Sporadic shelling and battles took place the day after the cease-fire was signed, and by the end of the month widespread fighting flared again on the whole front.

³². IHT, 10 December 1991, p. 2.

On November 18, the same day the city of Vukovar fell to the Serbs, the WEU Council agreed to commit naval forces to protect Red Cross missions rescuing wounded, women and children from Dubrovnik. In other words, the WEU offered to provide warships for the establishment of a "humanitarian corridor" across the Adriatic. It was stressed that it was not a question of military action but only participation in humanitarian measures.³³ One could argue that the WEU action was not much considering that: (i) Dubrovnik -- a city on the UNESCO World Heritage List (i.e. its monuments had been declared of "universal value", and their safekeeping "the responsibility of mankind") -- had been under siege and heavy attacks since October 1; (ii) Dubrovnik had always been Croatia and never part of Serbia, there were no Serbs in the city, and, as Lord Carrington himself had explicitly stated, the attacks were absolutely unwarranted;³⁴ (iii) negotiations not only with Croatian, but also with Serbian leaders were considered necessary to establish the form the naval assistance should take. This, together with the fact that the assistance was "offered", make the WEU decision appear anything but a bold action to impose a humanitarian act on a reluctant Serbia. However, the European attitude appears less appealing if one considers that the WEU had threatened retaliation against the Yugoslav navy in case of any attempt at interference with the humanitarian operations.³⁵

c. The issue of recognition

When the EC decided to impose economic sanctions on Yugoslavia, it was able to assume a substantially unified position on the issue of diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Slovenia: the Twelve agreed that the prospect of recognition would be taken into consideration only within the framework of a comprehensive peace. On that occasion, Germany adopted a pragmatic attitude, refraining from insisting on an early decision.³⁶

However, by the end of November, Chancellor Helmut Kohl stated that Germany would recognize Slovenia and Croatia by Christmas unless a political solution to the Yugoslav crisis was found, and that it would act alone if the other EC countries refused to go along.³⁷ On November 28, during his visit to Bonn, Italian Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti, declared that Italy was also ready to recognize the two republics.³⁸

From that point, Germany played a clear and decisive role in pushing the EC toward its recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. It rejected the firm U.S. warning against quick recognition; it rebuffed the U.N. assertion that such a move could jeopardize the dispatch of a U.N. force to Yugoslavia and eventually a peace settlement; it disregarded France's call for restraint and its warning against decisions taken outside the EC framework;³⁹ it indirectly forced France and Britain to modify their U.N. draft resolution on the point regarding the condemnation of "unilateral

³³. IHT, 19 November 1991, p. 2.

³⁴. IHT, 7 November 1991, p. 4.

³⁵. This was revealed by the Danish Foreign Minister, Ugge Elleman-Jensen, in an interview published by "Politiken". See Europe, n. 5650, 20-21 January 1991, p. 3.

³⁶. Europe, n. 5606, 9 November 1991, p. 3.

³⁷. When the Presidents of Slovenia and Croatia visited Germany in early December, Chacellor Kohl promised to go ahead with recognition.

³⁸. La Repubblica, 29 November 1991, p. 15.

³⁹. For President Mitterrand's comments in the German daily "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" and later, in the course of a television interview, see: IHT, 30 November - 1 December 1991, p. 2 and IHT, 7-8 December 1991, p. 2.

action" which could lead to a further deterioration of the situation;⁴⁰ it insisted, after the EC decision,⁴¹ that it would not feel bound by the judgment of the Arbitration Commission.⁴²

In Brussels, the EC agreed that recognition was to be conditional on that judgment for every member except Germany. In other words, Germany reserved the right to opt-out of the EC agreement. On the whole, the ten-hour long meeting marked another difficult moment for an EC still divided and uncertain about a common foreign policy only few days after Maastricht, confused about its role in the Yugoslav crisis, and with no other ideas except those of the continuation of the peace conference (knowing that no results could be expected) and the support of the U.N. initiatives. The overall impression was that of a Community showing more concern than effectiveness, and incapable of passing from a declaratory to a truly operational policy.

Bonn recognized Slovenia and Croatia on December 23, but decided to postpone the upgrading the two consulates it had already open in Zagreb and Ljubljana until January. Thus, it is debatable whether or not Germany had adhered to the letter and spirit of the EC resolution, which set December 23 as the first day on which a member state could declare its views whether the two republics met the criteria for recognition, and January 15, 1992 as the first day for formal recognition.

On January 15, the EC declared that its members had "decided to start the process of recognition" of Slovenia and Croatia to be conducted in accordance with each members' procedures. Belgium, Denmark, Italy and the United Kingdom were the first to follow the German lead in recognizing the independence of the two republics. France gave its "conditional recognition", waiting for Croatia to answer to the objections of the Badinter Commission about the Constitutional Law of December 4, 1991, which addressed the rights of the Serbian minority.

In fact, only Slovenia and Macedonia were found to respond fully to the prerequisites established by the EC.⁴³ Oddly, however, Croatia was recognized on the basis of its commitment to change the Constitutional Law in accordance with the remarks of the Commission, while Macedonia's quest for recognition was blocked by the explicit opposition of Greece. Overall, it was another example that beneath the surface of a seemingly uniform position the EC was still deeply divided and unable to express a true common foreign and security policy.

There is little doubt that, for the first time, Germany showed an unusual assertiveness, which underscored its growing political power within the EC and, at the same time, underlined its new willingness to maintain its stand in the face of American opposition and the sharp criticism of the United Nations.

⁴⁰. Since November 13, France and UK had been discussing a draft resolution on the Yugoslav crisis to be tabled at the U.N. Security Council with the aim of deterring Germany from an early recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. The principal points of the resolution regarded the tightening of the embargo on arms sales, the sending to Yugoslavia of a small precursor force to prepare the ground for a larger U.N. contingent, and the condemnation of unilateral moves. IHT, 17 December 1991, p. 1.

⁴¹. The EC Foreign Ministers decided on the recognition issue on December 16.

⁴². The EC established that the recognition should await the judgment of an arbitration commission (chaired by French jurist Robert Badinter) charged to determine if the two republics fulfilled the basic criteria of democracy, human rights, respect of borders and protection of minorities. IHT, 18 December 1991, p. 2. See also: Europe, n. 5631, 16-17 December 1991, p. 3.

⁴³. On the assessment of the Badinter Commission, see: Europe, n. 5647, p. 5.

But the points about Germany's new political stance (with all the troubling historical associations stemming from it),⁴⁴ about its determination to take an unpopular decision that was seen as very important for its own interests, and about its stubborn attitude to go ahead alone if necessary (perhaps the element which most strongly convinced its reluctant EC partners to follow suit) represent only one side of the coin, though certainly the preminent one.

In fact, Germany was not alone in its bid for early recognition. Belgium, Denmark and Italy supported the German position. Moreover, Bonn drafted with Paris a joint proposal establishing criteria and standards which had to be met before recognition could be granted.⁴⁵ Finally, in Brussels, Genscher backed down from his initial position that recognition could become operational within 24 hours.⁴⁶ Germany was leading and pushing the EC on the recognition issue but it could be said that the lead and the push were not as hard as it might have appeared. According to Leslie Gelb, "It was leadership with attention to followership".⁴⁷

d. The issue of a European interposition force

One last consideration concerns the debated plan of sending a European interposition force to Yugoslavia.

There were many good reasons for the WEU and the EC to shun the decision to deploy ground troops in a highly volatile and risky military situation with the task of not just keeping, but enforcing peace.

Yet, it could be argued that the EC unwillingness to apply a limited and calculated amount of military force to give true substance to its formal admonitions and threats eventually had adverse effects on its overall diplomatic effort -- apart from the fact that it revealed an EC incapable of managing the first real crisis on its door-steps in post-Cold War Europe.

The following factors suggest that the EC should have tried to enforce its diplomacy: (i) the federal armed forces were not neutral, but openly supporting Serbia's expansionist policy;⁴⁸ (ii) the siege and shelling of Dubrovnik was "an illegal act clearly aimed at the seizure of an indisputably Croatian city";⁴⁹ (iii) the mission of the EC observers was made very risky, to the point of losing their lives -- a helicopter with five observers on board was shot-down by a federal aircraft; (iv) the Serbian practice of "ethnic cleansing" was barbaric, cruel and against the most basic human rights; (v) the EC-sponsored conference had become an empty diplomatic exercise,

⁴⁴. On this issue, see: Tom Redburn, "In EC, Germans Emerge More Equal Than Others", IHT, 26 November 1991, p. 1. Joseph Fitchett, "Bonn Gives Now, For Long-Range Gain", IHT, 26 November 1991, p. 1. John Tagliabue, "The New and Bolder Germany: No Longer a Political Dwarf", IHT, 18 December 1991, p. 2. Leslie H. Gelb, "Germany Steps Out Smartly", IHT, 23 December 1991, p. 4.

⁴⁵. The fact that the German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher stressed the close Franco-German cooperation "even in this complex matter", i.e. the establishment of the criteria for recognition, could be seen as a German attempt at softening the refusal to accept the French recommendations to delay the recognition. On the other hand, it was easy to agree on criteria that Bonn had little intention to take as a condition capable of blocking its drive toward recognition. On Genscher's interview, see Europe, n. 5631, 16-17 December 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁶. Europe, n. 5632, 18 december 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁷. Leslie H. Gelb, cit. For a different opinion which portrays German recognition fervor as a premature policy and a onesided oversimplificaton, see Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Yugoslavia: The First Goal Was Damage Limitation, IHT, 15 April 1992, p. 6. An opposite view is found on Jonathan Eyal, "It Was a Test Case, and America Failed", *ibid.*

⁴⁸. EC declaration on Yugoslavia of October 6, 1991. Europe, n. 5583, 7-8 October 1991, p. 5.

⁴⁹. EC declaration. IHT, 28 October 1991, p. 2.

while the cease-fires were regularly signed and regularly broken. The CSCE and the UN would have provided a legal framework for an eventual military intervention by the EC.

This does not mean that the WEU should necessarily have sent a ground troop contingent to Yugoslavia, but it means that more serious thinking should have been given to the selective use of air and sea power. The air and naval forces of the major European states were fully capable of performing the three tasks needed to send a strong signal mainly to Belgrade, but also to Zagreb: first, keeping the federal aircraft on the ground -- by counterair missions against selected airbases and offensive CAPs conducted in Yugoslav air space; second, total sea control of the Adriatic, sweeping away any attempts of naval blockade or naval bombardment on the part of the federal Navy; third, interdiction with surgical strikes of the main assets of Serbian superiority, i.e. tanks and heavy artillery, together with their vulnerable logistic tail.⁵⁰ The eventuality of U.S. air and naval forces participating in the operations would have represented powerful support and given an even clearer and stronger signal.

This course of action -- militarily minimal, high-tech, low-casualty, internally approved and wrapped in a peace plan⁵¹ -- could have achieved three goals: reducing the military capabilities of the federal armed forces; altering Serbian calculations of costs and benefits of EC peace proposals; indicating the EC's willingness of going beyond words, thus strengthening its crisis-management effort.

Obviously, the potential political and military risks and repercussions of such an operation were not to be underestimated and each part should have been planned considering all the possible contingencies and flawlessly executed. Probably, even such a military intervention would not have solved the situation immediately. It was unlikely, though possible, that the punishment inflicted on the aggressors could stop the fighting. Moreover, one could not exclude the possibility that the EC would have been forced to contemplate even harsher actions such as the bombing of key strategic assets in Serbia itself, thus opening a totally new phase of the conflict. However, apart from the above mentioned goals, the intervention would have dispelled all the allusions about a European double standard, the image of an EC relegated to the role of a bystander, and the impression that it still intended its security in a very narrow sense - three elements which were bound to have long lasting effects within and outside the Community.

However, a different EC was needed, even for a limited military option: more politically mature, less internally divided (with Germany less biased toward Croatia) and more determined about its role.

7. 15 JANUARY - 31 AUGUST 1992. THE INTERVENTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE WAR IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Several important elements form the background against which the analysis of the EC and WEU policies in this time-frame of the Yugoslav crisis shall be conducted.

⁵⁰. This type of assessment has also been conducted by other strategic analysts, experts and journalists and applied not only to the Croatian, but also to the Bosnian case. In particular, see Philip Zelikov, "The New Concert of Europe", *Survival*, vol. 34, n. 2, IISS, London, Summer 1992, pp. 12-30. Brian Beedham, "Europe and America Could Interdict Serbia's Arms", *IHT*, 18 May 1992, p. 4, and Antony Lewis, "What Was That About a New World Order?", *ibid*.

⁵¹. This definition was given by Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Moving to Intervention In Yugoslavia", *The Washinton Post (WP)*, 22 May 1992, A39.

(i) The deployment of a UN contingent to Croatia,⁵² and the beginning of an uncertain and uneasy truce in the areas of previous fighting, further complicated by the Serbian reluctance to withdraw all the units of the federal army, as agreed.⁵³

The subsequent deployment of a small U.N. contingent in Sarajevo with the difficult and risky task of keeping the airport open to relief flights.

(ii) The forced retirement of 30 senior generals and admirals (including former Defense Minister Gen. Kadijevic), a move clearly aimed at purging the federal armed forces of all non-Serb officers, and dismissing those who were lukewarm about or opposed to President Milosevic's policy. Significantly, the retirement was announced a day before the referendum for independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, opening speculations that Belgrade was preparing for a new round of its expansionist drive, and wanted to be sure about the full loyalty of its armed forces.

(iii) The spread of the civil war to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Sporadic ethnic clashes, a fall-out of the civil war in Croatia, had started in Bosnia-Herzegovina since August 1991.⁵⁴ They intensified immediately after the referendum in which 63.4 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina's electorate voted overwhelmingly for secession (99.43 percent in favor).⁵⁵ By the summer of 1992 the fighting assumed the features of a blatant war of aggression of Serbia against the new republic -- whose independence had been recognized in early April by the EC and the United States,⁵⁶ and eventually accepted as a U.N. member in May 1992 -- an unjustified Serbian "land grab", a clear attempt to seize with force and terror Slav-Muslim populated territories.⁵⁷ By September, Serbia had acquired more than two-thirds of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while, at the same time, Croatian forces annexed a western chunk of the republic's territory.

(iv) The continuous, evident involvement of the federal armed forces in the new war. This is demonstrated by: the support given to Serb irregulars; the use of federal aircraft in bombing raids against Bosnia-Herzegovina's towns; and the refusal of the federal troops to withdraw from Bosnia even after the declaration of the "new" Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), which formally made them foreign forces, operating as an invading army in the territory of a neighbor country.

(v) The continuation of the Serbian practice of "ethnic cleansing". This, together with the accounts of mass killings and deliberate starvation of prisoners held in Serbian concentration camps, and the merciless shelling of Mostar, Goradze and Sarajevo, the last two under siege for months, projected a dark image of Serbian behaviour and sparked an international effort to stop Bosnia's tragedy.

⁵². An initial French contingent of 1,200 soldiers to be located in the Southern Croatian region of Krajina arrived in Yugoslavia on April 5. The deployment of the nearly 14,000-man UN force was completed by April 25. It was the second largest UN peacekeeping force since 1960 and the first to be stationed on European mainland.

⁵³. Laura Silber, "Croatian Peace Plan Periled as Army Halts Pullout", Washington Post (WP), 22 May 1992, p. A32.

⁵⁴. Europe, n. 5553, 26-27 August 1991, p. 4.

⁵⁵. IHT, 4 March 1992, p. 6.

⁵⁶. Bosnia-Herzegovina was later accepted as a member of the CSCE.

⁵⁷. Blaine Harden, "Put Simply, It's a Serbian Land Grab", IHT, 4 May 1992, p. 2. Jeri Laber and Ivana Nizich, "Milosevic's Land Grab", WP, 25 May 1992, A25.

(vi) The creation of the largest flood of civilian refugees in Europe since World-War II, as a result of the fighting and the systematic forced relocation of the Muslim population of Bosnia.⁵⁸

(vii) The scarce effectiveness of the economic sanctions, largely circumvented through Hungary, Romania and Greece, and through the use of the Danube river as a by-passing waterway.⁵⁹ Even the arms embargo was more easily defied by Croatia after its recognition,⁶⁰ and Serbia could withstand it because of the stocks of arms possessed by the former federal army and its significant arms industry.

(viii) The eventual withdrawal of the EC monitors from all the major Bosnian towns, including Sarajevo, because of the intensification of the fighting. This further weakened the EC role.

(ix) The gradually more direct and forceful involvement of the U.S. diplomacy in the Yugoslav crisis. The strong American lead in the U.N. decision to apply economic sanctions against Yugoslavia and its willingness to provide naval air, and air force air support for the U.N. humanitarian missions, are two good cases in point.

The overall picture of the EC diplomacy is characterized by several important elements: (i) the continuous EC faith in the virtues and possibilities of the conference chaired by Lord Carrington, and the EC-sponsored talks among the Bosnian ethnic factions; (ii) the very slow pace of the EC initiatives when compared to the rapid development of the events in Yugoslavia; (iii) the negative influence of the divisions still existing among the Twelve on the EC action; (iv) the special role played by France in the EC crisis management effort; (v) the EC attempt of better enforcing trade sanctions through a naval monitoring operation in the Adriatic organized and conducted by the WEU.

a. The peace conference

There was something odd in the EC insistence on going ahead with the conference on Yugoslavia, a diplomatic exercise that even some EC officials regarded as useless,⁶¹ without first trying to put more pressures on the participants with other diplomatic, economic or military measures. And it appears even more peculiar that in early April, while the conference was leading nowhere and while the civil war was raging in Bosnia, the EC was considering lifting trade sanctions against Serbia on the basis of its more constructive approach to the peace talks. In June, while the carnage in Bosnia-Herzegovina was going on unabated, the attempt of reviving the EC sponsored peace process ended in total failure, prompting Lord Carrington to declare that the

⁵⁸. On the subject, Peter Maass, "Croatia Inundated by Refugees Asks Western Europe for Help", WP, 24 May 1992, A39. Also IHT 24 July 1992, p. 6. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (HCF), in May there were 1.3 million refugees from Yugoslavia. Europe, n. 5733, 20 May 1992, p. 4. By July, the refugees and homeless people had increased to 2.2 million.

⁵⁹. According to press reports, the commercial traffic between Europe and Serbia had never really stopped. LR, 29 July 1992, p. 16.

⁶⁰. Blaine Harden, "Despite Embargo, Croatia Awaits Jets", IHT, 11 February 1992, p. 2. Blaine Harden, "Croats Begin Shelling the Serbs Who Are Besieging Sarajevo", IHT, 24 June, 1992, p. 2.

⁶¹. A diplomat close to the conference declared after the 12th session held in Brussels on May 6: "It is stuck. It had stopped making headway". IHT, 7 May 1992, p. 2. Lord Carrington himself depicted a bleak picture of the conference declaring that none of its goals had so far been attained. Pietro Sormani, "Insabbiata a Bruxelles la conferenza di pace", CS, 7 May 1992, p. 11.

results "had been disheartening".⁶² In July, the same outcome emerged from the talks held in London where a new cease-fire (the 39th!) was signed, and almost immediately violated. In August, the EC attempt to revive the negotiations was boycotted by the President of Serbia and Montenegro. Finally, on the eve of the London international conference on Yugoslavia on August 26, Lord Carrington announced his resignation, a decision which appeared to be a sign of personal frustration, and an explicit demonstration of distrust toward the capability of world diplomacy to solve the crisis.

b. The slow pace of EC diplomacy

The slow pace of EC initiatives may be accounted for by the following beliefs: a brokerage role was sufficient; exhortations of peace would eventually convince the warring parties; "there has got to be a solution at the end",⁶³ and such a solution could come through endless negotiations; there was good faith in the signing of agreements and cease-fires when it had become clear, after months of negotiations, that no one was willing to let agreements and cease-fires to interfere with their ultimate war aims.

In fact, the Community took diplomatic measures, but again it gave the impression of being very reluctant to isolate or punish Serbia. Even the French eight-point plan presented at the EC meeting in Portugal in early May seemed detached from the real situation in Bosnia.⁶⁴ Only on May 11, did the EC finally decide to recall all of its ambassadors from Belgrade (it was the least threatening move to take), while postponing any decision on the eventuality of much talked-about tighter economic sanctions. By the end of May, the set of sanctions proposed by the EC commission was still seen as a draft to be thoroughly discussed, while at the U.N. the proposals made by the United Kingdom were still under consideration, and the precise nature of the additional sanctions still undefined.⁶⁵ The EC was still attached to the principles of "progressive sanctions", hoping they would change Serbia's behaviour.⁶⁶

On May 27, the EC Permanent Representatives decided on a two-stage sanctions package, with an oil embargo delayed until the second stage.⁶⁷ The fact that the measures were taken just three days after the Lisbon summit where the Europeans were openly criticized and admonished by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker for acting too slowly, gave way to speculations that the EC had acted more as a result of U.S. diplomatic pressures, and the intention to act before the U.N., than of its own convictions. The sanctions, less far reaching than those adopted by the U.N., were officially approved by the EC Council on June 1, and expanded to cover the oil embargo.

Finally, on 17 August, the EC, while stressing the need for urgent steps to tighten the trade embargo against the new Yugoslav republic, agreed to postpone any decision on what was really needed to reach that goal -- another clear example of the slow pace of the European diplomacy, in fact bordering on political impotence.

c. The divisions among the Twelve

During the first six months of 1992, the EC showed that its policy toward the Yugoslav crisis was very far from the dream of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Actually,

⁶². IHT, 26 June 1992, p. 2. Europe, n. 5761, 28-29 June 1992, p. 4.

⁶³. IHT, 26 June, cit.

⁶⁴. On the French plan, Europe, n. 5722, 4-5 May 1992, p. 5.

⁶⁵. John M. Goshko, "Yugoslavia's Airline Loses Its U.S. Landing Rights", WP, 21 May 1992, p. A44.

⁶⁶. Europe, n. 5737, 25-26 May 1992, p. 4.

⁶⁷. Alan Riding, "Europeans Impose a Partial Embargo on Belgrade Trade", The New York Times (NYT), 28 May 1992, A1.

a basic lack of consensus forced the Community to prove its cohesion by avoiding the tougher problems and postponing their possible solutions.

The issues of recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, and the sanctions against Serbia are two good cases in point, while the successful effort of Greece in blocking the EC recognition of Macedonia's independence notwithstanding the positive verdict of the Badinter Commission is another example of internal disagreement capable of blocking a unified stance.

Among the Twelve, France and Greece were reportedly objecting and resisting the application of tougher economic measures and the attempt of isolating Serbia.⁶⁸ Even Belgium was against political measures such as the exclusions of Yugoslavia from the CSCE.⁶⁹ The disagreement led to what was defined as a "political accord" on sanctions.⁷⁰ When the sanctions were eventually imposed, Germany and Italy had already cancelled landing rights for JAT and Germany had also banned commercial rail and road traffic. Moreover, the initial EC decision to exclude the oil embargo on the grounds that only a global boycott would have been effective -- although this was essentially the case considering that Britain and Greece accounted for only 11 percent of Serbia's and Montenegro's imports -- could be seen as an attempt to protect the economic interests of two EC members in case the U.N. did not impose an oil ban. Britain, as a Security Council member, subsequently approved the U.N. oil embargo, thus dispelling any speculations that it might have contributed to the initial partiality of the EC trade sanctions. However, the fact that only at the end of August did Greece finally end fuel exports to Serbia -- to silence critics who contended it was breaking the U.N. embargo -- tells a lot about the weight of national interests versus the commitment to the CFSP.⁷¹

d. The special role of France

Within the Twelve, France gave the impression of playing a special role, which somehow appeared eccentric in relation to the positions of its EC partners and more attuned, positively or negatively depending on the perspective which is adopted, to a specific French national line.

At first, a very cautious approach was reportedly taken in the initial phase of the crisis, and this is best exemplified by the already mentioned resistance at acting more boldly against Serbia.

Afterwards, a more active line was embraced by assuming a series of initiatives ranging from the willingness to provide a significant contingent to the U.N. force,⁷² to the dramatic mission of President Mitterrand to Sarajevo; from the strong position taken to endorse the EC policy of possible military action to assure the delivery of humanitarian aid,⁷³ to the determination shown by landing the first four relief aircraft in Sarajevo without waiting for U.N. troops to fully secure the airport.

France's activism was seen by other EC partners mainly as an attempt to project the image of French grandeur, as a French penchant for the "grand geste" (the real aim being the French domestic political situation), while the fact that President Mitterrand informed none of the

⁶⁸. Greece was the only EC member to participate in the ceremony for the proclamation of the new Yugoslav state on April 27, 1992. On the French and Greek attitude, Maurizio Ricci, "Ma Francia e Grecia paralizzano le scelte della Comunità", LR, 24 May 1992, p. 15, and Alan Riding, cit.

⁶⁹. Europe, n. 5719, 29 April 1992, p. 3.

⁷⁰. Europe, n. 5740, 30 May 1992, p. 3.

⁷¹. IHT, 4 June 1992, p. 4. David Binder, "U.S. to Seek Tighter Sanctions on Serbia", IHT, 22-23 August 1992, p. 5.

⁷². France had about 3,000 men assigned to the U.N. force in Yugoslavia. In August, Paris offered to send 1,100 additional troops to help protect relief missions in Bosnia.

⁷³. At the Lisbon summit, France, together with Italy and The Netherlands, reportedly supported a direct and immediate EC relief operation without waiting for a U.N. resolution. The less explicit EC endorsement which appeared on the EC declaration was defined by President Mitterrand as "the absolute minimum position" that could be accepted.

participants in the Lisbon summit, not even Chacellor Kohl, about his trip caused irritation and bitter comments about the persistent lack of coordination in the EC.⁷⁴

However, it was also argued that the significance of President Mitterrand's daring gesture eventually reverberated to the EC, adding credibility to its future diplomatic action and helping to regain some of the trust lost because of the show of months of political and military impotence.

e. The WEU naval operations in the Adriatic

On June 19, at the Council meeting in Petersberg, the WEU was directed to examine and recommend measures to help enforce the U.N. embargo against Serbia.

On June 26, at the end of a meeting of its representatives in London, the WEU expressed its intention of studying the feasibility of deploying naval units in the Adriatic.

Finally, on July 10, in Helsinki the WEU announced that it would send naval and air forces to the Adriatic to monitor respect of the U.N. embargo. On the same day, NATO took an identical initiative. The "OTRANTO" operation was organized, coordinated and directed by Italy. The WEU warships were to patrol the Otranto Channel, while the NATO naval force was to conduct monitoring operations in the Southern Adriatic, opposite the Montenegro coast.

In this context, some considerations seem pertinent.

(i) It took more than one month after the U.N. imposed its sanctions for the WEU to make its decision. Too long if one considers the importance of the trade embargo as a diplomatic tool to pressure Serbia into serious negotiations. Furthermore, such an operation should have been studied and planned by the WEU's military staffs long before sanctions were even considered, and it should have been ready to be implemented at once.

(ii) The operation was the first true European initiative in the field of defense, and the first in which WEU ships were under a single command -- a totally different situation from that of the embargo enforced against the Iraq, and the humanitarian relief operations conducted from Dubrovnik by French, British and Italian ships.⁷⁵

(iii) It is significant that for the first time NATO and WEU forces were able to operate with a single mission and in the same area (although divided into two main zones), but under two different command authorities. The experience gained in the coordination of the two naval forces is bound to be precious for future common intervention. However, the double command setting can be appropriately adopted only in a peacetime environment. In case of hostilities, it would be operationally unacceptable.

(iv) The limits imposed on the monitoring mission i.e. to determine whether cargo banned by the U.N. embargo was still arriving in Montenegro and Serbia (without the authority to stop and search ships, relying only on interrogations of the cargo commanders via radio) were evidently inconsistent with the aim of true control. Thus, the operation ended by appearing not as a naval blockade, but just as a diplomatic gesture with little impact on potential embargo breaches.

(v) The eventual addition of a German destroyer to the NATO maritime force and three Maritime Air Patrol (MAP) aircraft to the WEU force constituted an important change in Germany's attitude toward the participation of its armed forces in military operations connected with peacekeeping operations outside NATO's area of responsibility. For the first time, Germany accepted the principle that German troops could participate in peacekeeping missions under the

⁷⁴. Joseph Fitchett, "Mitterrand's Panache Gains Him Stature", IHT, 29 June 1992, p. 2. William Drozdiak, "Mitterrand's Secret Trip to Sarajevo: Generous but Solitary.", IHT, 30 June 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁵. Europe, n. 5650, 20-21 January 1992, p. 3.

U.N. authority, even though serious constitutional and political problems had yet to be solved.

8. FROM THE LONDON CONFERENCE ON YUGOSLAVIA (AUGUST 26) TO THE EARLY PART OF 1993

The international conference on Yugoslavia, jointly sponsored by the EC and the United Nations, was held in London at the end of August with the participation of the representatives of some twenty countries, including the leaders of the six former Yugoslav republics, representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and the CSCE.

The conference enunciated a series of principles in line with those which had guided the EC's peace efforts since mid-1991. They were agreed upon by Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. Moreover, the conference set up a round-the-clock, diplomatic open house in Geneva, where six working groups were given the task of putting those principles into practice.

But the background on which the EC was forced to shape its diplomatic actions was not that provided by the papers signed in London. And the actual situation on the ground was far from what the conference hoped for: a diplomatic settlement capable of stopping the bloodshed.

- There were widespread and confirmed reports and accounts of mass executions and starvation of prisoners in Serb concentration camps and systematic rape of thousands of Muslim women.⁷⁶

- Serbian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued their military operations and expanded their territorial gains to the north and north-west, persisting in their "ethnic cleansing" practices⁷⁷ and turning to areas which were 80 percent Muslim.

- Serbian leaders' promises of not interfering with or obstructing humanitarian convoys carrying food and medicines, and concentrating large caliber weapons (artillery over 100mm, 82mm mortars, tanks and rocket launchers) in eleven sites, and putting them under UN supervision were not maintained. In fact, shelling continued from monitored and unmonitored positions.

- Serbian aircraft and helicopters continued to defy the UN no-flight zone in Bosnia-Herzegovina approved on October 9. Though the majority of the flights were for ferrying troops and equipment, combat missions were also reportedly flown.

- Croatian forces were also expanding their territorial control. The city of Mostar was taken on October 25 and proclaimed capital of the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosne, while in Northern Bosnia there was fighting between Croats and Bosnian Muslims.⁷⁸

⁷⁶. John M. Goshko, "New Serbian Atrocities Are Documented by U.S.", IHT, 9 December 1992, p. 2. On the issue of concentration camps still operating five months after Serbia's commitment to shut them down, see "Michael R. Gordon, "Serbia Still Runs 135 Prison Camps, U.S. Thinks", IHT, 25 January 1993, p. 1.

⁷⁷. For a vivid account of what happened in Bosanski Novi, a town in northern Bosnia, see *The Economist*, 1 August 1992, pp. 20-21. Also "Serbs Lay Siege to Bosnian North", IHT, 5 November 1992, p. 7. See also Mary Battiata, "A Town's Bloody Cleansing", WP 2 November 1992, p. A1.

⁷⁸. On the reports about a Serb-Croat accord and fighting between Bosnian Muslims and ethnic Croatian forces, see Stephen Kinzer, "Envoys Talk of a Serb-Croat Entente", *The New York Times* (NYT), 25 October 1992, A12, and

- At the end of October, the parliaments of the self-proclaimed Serbian republics in Croatia and Bosnia met in joint session in Prijedor in north-eastern Bosnia. The parliaments agreed to start the legal process of unification.⁷⁹

- On December 20, the presidential and parliamentary elections in the FRY brought the re-election of hardliner Slobodan Milosevic and the defeat of the opposition leader Milan Panic, while the Socialist Party of Serbia won 101 seats and the extremist Serbian Radical Party gained 73 seats .

- At the end of January 1993, new fighting erupted between Croatian and Serbian forces when Croatian troops crossed the U.N. cease-fire line into Krajina in an attempt to regain some territory.

- In early February, Russia explicitly warned the Western countries about taking military measures against Serbia, thus adding a complicating factor to the Yugoslav crisis.

Confronted with a situation that appeared intractable both in political and military terms, and fully aware that its role had become somewhat marginal, the EC focused its actions on the Geneva conference, on tightening the embargo against Serbia and Montenegro, and on providing humanitarian aid to the Bosnian population.

The EC realized that something had to be done to stop the war, but, as in the past, it could not agree on how. Once more, the European governments gave the impression of being truly united only on what they agreed they would not and could not do.

Divisions among the Twelve emerged again on the following issues: an international conference on Yugoslavia proposed by France and initially rejected by Britain; the resettlement of the refugees, with Germany asking for EC help because it felt it was supporting an unfair burden;⁸⁰ the measures to be adopted to tighten the trade embargo, Greece being charged of tolerating flagrant violations of trade sanctions; relief convoys and troops needed to protect them; the possibility of an armed intervention which would go beyond military support for humanitarian aid; the recognition of Macedonia, with Greece still opposed to it, and capable of constraining EC decision.

EC effectiveness was further impaired by events which tended to concentrate its members' attention on domestic policies.

On the one hand, Denmark vote against the Maastricht treaty, France's marginal approval and Britain's uncertainties projected a bleak picture about the future of European unity and weakened the prospect of a CFSP; on the other hand, the collapse of the European Monetary System, and the serious economic situation in all European countries, were obvious contributing factors to a lesser priority given to European foreign policy.

John F. Burns, "Attacks by Croatian Force Put New Strains on Bosnian Government's Unity", NYT, 27 October 1992, p. A10. Peter Maass, "Bosnian Muslims Face Fight With Supposed Allies: Croats", WP, 29 October 1992, p. A25. See also John F. Burns, "Bosnians Run Short Of Time And Allies", NYT, 1 November 1992, p. E4.

⁷⁹. The Economist, 7 November 1992, p. 33.

⁸⁰. Germany had taken 275,000 refugees, while Britain and France had taken around 1,100 each. See The Economist, 1 August 1992, p. 11 and IHT, 14 September 1992, p. 1.

In fact, the impression was that the United Nations more than the EC was now conducting the diplomatic and military game on the Yugoslav chessboard. More and more, the EC was playing a complementary and supportive role of the actions taken by the UN Security Council and Assembly.

Apart from the diplomatic activism of the UN, the period was characterized by the special role of France, an evident, simmering competition between the WEU and NATO and the eventual emergence of NATO as one of the main players in the military field.

a. The role of France

France, as in the previous periods, demonstrated a more explicit attitude for direct involvement, even though limited to humanitarian aid and not aimed at enforcing a military solution.

As early as the beginning of August, President Mitterrand called for the protection of convoys delivering emergency supplies, and France was the first to offer 1,100 additional troops, plus troop carriers, light armored vehicles and helicopters to help protect relief missions.⁸¹

For different reasons, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and other EC governments were unwilling to send troops. On 20 August, the Italian Defense Minister, Salvo Andò, in a cautious interview hinted at the possibility of an Italian contribution of 1,000-1,500 soldiers, but only within the framework of a multinational contingent with clear military goals.⁸² But the Italian preference was for the tightening of the embargo and for providing the technical and logistic support for the air missions eventually flown from the Italian territory. The UK reversed its policy at the end of September, after the UN Security Council accepted the recommendations from Secretary General Boutros-Ghali to expand the UNPROFOR by 6,000 soldiers. But the decision to send 1,800 additional men (later increased to 2,400), over 1,000 vehicles and an estimated 600 tons of stores had to overcome some strong opposition.⁸³ Actually, in the end, only France, the UK and Spain provided additional forces to the UNPROFOR.

Moreover, on October 3, French transport aircraft were the first, together with American transports, to resume relief flights into Sarajevo, one month after they were suspended when an Italian cargo was shot down by a surface-to-air missile.⁸⁴

It was again France (the initiative was worked out in cooperation with Italy) to propose another international conference and to advance the idea for the creation of safe havens inside Bosnia. Though both proposals were criticized (particularly the second) and eventually rejected because it was felt it could lead to an ethnical partition of the country, they demonstrated that, on the one hand, France had not abandoned its intention to be the European "leader" in the initiatives for the solution of the Yugoslav crisis, and, on the other hand, its tendency to play a "cavalier seul" role outside the EC coordination framework.

⁸¹. Alan Riding, "France Offers More Troops To Back Up Bosnia Aid", IHT, 15-16 August 1992, p. 1. On President Mitterrand's call, see IHT, 6 August 1992, p. 1. See also "Alan Riding, "Mitterrand Wan't Go Beyond UN Force Plan", IHT, 14 August 1992, p. 2.

⁸². Interview by Guido Gentili, CS, 20 August 1992, p. 7. On the response of the Italian military to the Minister's unexpected offer, see the interview of Gen. Mario Buscemi, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, by Gianfranco Simone, CS, 21 August 1992, p.2.

⁸³. The deployment of the UK military contingent, initiated on October 15, was completed by November 13.

⁸⁴. IHT, 3-4 October 1992, p. 2.

Finally, France was the only European country in which a large segment of the public, including intellectuals and representatives of the Socialist Party and the opposition conservatives, was in favor of a military intervention in support of the Bosnian Muslims.⁸⁵ This public pressure was a factor that the French government could not overlook for long and was eventually bound to influence France's policy.

b. The WEU-NATO competition

As previously said, the double command arrangement established for the naval embargo operations conducted by a WEU naval force and by the units of NATO's STANAVFORMED, was operationally critical, particularly if the situation would suddenly change from a peacetime setting to a wartime environment.⁸⁶

The arrangement was not changed when, responding to a Security Council resolution calling for a naval blockade, first NATO on November 18, and then the WEU on November 20, decided to start stop-and-search naval operations in the Adriatic.⁸⁷ But the German destroyer "Hamburg" was ordered not to participate in the enforcement of these new measures, another indication of how difficult and far the prospects of ever achieving a European CFSP were.

The competition -- or should one say the duplication? -- was also evident in two small episodes.

On August 6, NATO's Political Committee instructed the Military Staff to begin contingency planning in three areas: supervision of heavy weapons, protection of humanitarian relief convoys and total enforcement of the trade embargo. After a first report that indicated the force needed for a "heavy operation" in Bosnia (the establishment of a protected land corridor) was in the order of 100,000 soldiers, the Military Staff was requested to study other deployment options and present them by August 24, on the eve of the London Conference.⁸⁸

On August 13, the WEU gave its military experts the same August 24 deadline for the preparation of a similar report outlining different deployment options.

On August 28, the WEU offered the UN 5,000 lightly armed soldiers from France, Belgium, Italy, Britain, the Netherlands and Spain with vehicles, equipment and logistic support for the protection of relief convoys.

⁸⁵. A poll taken at the end of December 1992 showed that 68 percent of those interviewed were in favor of a more aggressive and interventionist French policy. William Drozdiak, "Pressure for Bosnia Intervention Rises in France", IHT, 24-25 December 1992, p. 2.

⁸⁶. On the confusion possibly arising from this setting, see *The Economist*, 15 August 1992, p. 20.

⁸⁷. William Drozdiak, "NATO Agrees to Impose Blockade of Serbia", WP, 19 November 1992, p. A31. Alan Cowell, "Europeans and NATO Blockade Adriatic", IHT, 21-22 November 1992, p. 1. Ettore Petta, "Blocco dell'Adriatico. Flotta NATO in azione", CS, 19 November 1992, p. 13, and Guido Santevecchi, "L'Europa stringe la morsa jugoslava", CS, 21 November 1992, p. 7.

⁸⁸. The new contingency plans recommended the deployment of a smaller force of 6,000 troops to protect the delivery of relief aid. However, NATO ambassadors did not endorse the planning and asked for a more detailed study of the issue. IHT, 7 August 1992, p. 1. Also, Marc Fisher, "Across Europe Pressure For Intervention is Rising", IHT, 8-9 August 1992, p. 2. Frederick Bonnart, "What Is Done For Bosnia Will Have To Be Done Well", IHT, 11 August 1992, p. 4. IHT, 25 August 1992, p. 6.

On September 2, NATO agreed to offer 6,000 troops and support equipment to the UN to perform the same mission of protecting the delivery of humanitarian aid, and gave the UN and the CSCE the pertaining contingency planning.

Now, the issue is not the legitimacy of each organization to plan and decide military actions, or to offer military forces for peacekeeping roles. The issue is that NATO could not provide 6,000 soldiers without also resorting to land forces of WEU countries, already committed by the WEU offer.⁸⁹ No European country, either WEU and/or NATO member, was and is in the position of providing combat-ready units to both NATO and the WEU. Thus, the 6,000 men force offered by NATO implicitly included some of the same soldiers offered by the WEU.

c. The emergence of a preeminent NATO role

During his electoral campaign, the U.S. democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton openly called for a more aggressive American response to the Yugoslav crisis.

On November 16, after being elected Clinton stressed his intention to formulate a more active role for the United States in the civil war in Bosnia.

The divisions within NATO on the possibility and feasibility of a military intervention in Bosnia substantially duplicated those which had emerged within the EC and the WEU. However, from the moment the United States again assumed its traditional leading role, major differences were gradually overcome. The stiffening of American resolve and the change of course of the United States policy (which started in the last days of President Bush's presidency and accelerated under President Clinton) was followed by the European countries, France and Britain included,⁹⁰ though not without some resistance, and never in full agreement on the need of sending ground troops to Bosnia with a peace-enforcing mission, or to use air power against Serbian forces. In fact, by February, even the Clinton Administration appeared to be backing off from the prospect of an early use of military force.

However, a more direct American involvement was eventually bound not only to affect the overall Western diplomatic course of action, but also, on the military plane, to enhance the ultimate preeminence of NATO, the organization within which the United States was the strongest and most influential member.

Moreover, the UN seemed to recognize NATO as the sole organization capable of providing military force to support and enforce its resolutions. And this was another, important element enhancing NATO's preeminence. In fact, by mid-December, UN Secretary General Butros Ghali requested NATO to draw contingency plans for further military actions in Bosnia, including the enforcement of the no-flight zone approved by the Security Council in October.⁹¹

⁸⁹. Considering that Germany and the U.S. were expected to provide only logistic support and that the NATO force reportedly had to rely on 1,200 Canadians, 1,000 Turks, plus small contingents of Danish and Norwegian soldiers, the 6,000 level could be reached only with the participation of forces of other NATO countries, which are also members of the WEU.

⁹⁰. On the change of U.S. policy, see John M. Goshko and Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Looks Closer At Taking Offensive To Halt Balkans War, IHT, 29 January 1993, p. 1. On France, see Joseph Fitchett, "Military Hits Against Serbs Are Closer to Allied Plans," IHT, 29 December 1992, 1. On the U.K., see "U.K., in Shift, Will Consider Use of Force In Balkans", 31 December 1992 - 1 January 1993, p. 1.

⁹¹. "NATO Drafts Contingency Plans for UN Bosnia Intervention", IHT, 16 December 1992, p. 2.

Thus, by the end of the year, NATO appeared increasingly engage in drafting feasibility studies of different military intervention options, getting ready for the decisions eventually made by the UN.⁹²

Finally, even the EC and UN mediators, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, wanted to use NATO aircraft to enforce the provisions of their peace plan.⁹³

9. CONCLUSIONS

Some of the pluses and minuses of Europe's score in confronting the Yugoslav crisis have already been discussed in the course of the preceding analysis. A few additional considerations will be presented here.

It would be easy to say -- but it would not be fair -- that Europe has done all it could to stop the civil war in Yugoslavia. And it would be easy to say -- but it would not be fair -- that Europe has done very little, or nothing at all. The situation was not simply defined because it was not a matter of rescuing an independent country invaded by an aggressive neighbor, as in the Iraq-Kuwait case, but of bringing peace to a country which had collapsed from within. It was clear that people in Yugoslavia did not desire to remain part of the same state and, for ethnic reasons, they had no intention to be part of the same republic. In any case, it is very difficult to defend a country from itself.

The impression is that Europe was always late in acting --even on those measures which did not involve direct military intervention. A good case in point is that the WEU decided on a tighter embargo on the Danube only in April 1993 (hoping to be able to enforce it in a month) although it had been evident from the outset that the river was the main route for breaching the embargo.

Not having intervened in the earliest phase of the crisis when there was at least a small chance for results, if adequate actions had been taken to show Europe's determination, the European countries did not find the way to do so later. It could be argued that a show of force when it still had a political and military meaning and was operationally easier might have prevented the ensuing civil war. As the crisis progressed, becoming even more complex and difficult, the possibilities of low-cost interventions decreased together with the weakening of the European capacity to shape a CFSP.

Europe continued to adopt the best of bad alternatives -- endless diplomatic effort, full support for the delivery of humanitarian aid, tightened sanctions -- hoping that a negotiated settlement would eventually emerge, without a clear, common policy aimed at least at avoiding the extension of the war to Kosovo and Macedonia.

⁹². The plans prepared by NATO on the enforcement of the no-fly zone were submitted to the UN Secretary General on January 14. Frederick Bonnart, "Bosnia: Limited Force Won't Help", IHT, 27 January 1993, p. 6.

⁹³. The prospective use was for enforcement of the no-flight zone, of for strikes against those forces violating the peace-plan provisions. Paul Lewis, "Mediators Seek NATO Air Support In Bosnia", IHT, 8 February 1993, p. 2.

It is difficult to believe, though it was quite often stated, that if the Maastricht treaty had been in force, Europe would have acted more forcefully and in a more united way. The problem, in fact, is not the ratification of a document, but the capability of reaching an agreement on a true common foreign and security policy. Obviously, this will occur only if a common assessment of the crisis situation and a common view on the best instruments which could be utilized for peace-keeping or peace-enforcing is eventually reached.

Unfortunately, this was not the case in the Yugoslav crisis and the EC was not capable of playing an effective and decisive role. True, this role was not played by any other country or international organization. But Yugoslavia was on Europe's doorstep and after so much talk about Europe finally becoming an actor to be reckoned with on the international scene, its performance did not meet expectations.