Slobodan Milošević was an ambitious man. Born in a modest family and with tragic circumstances, he rose all the way to the top of Serbian politics relatively quickly. Emboldened by his Marxist wife and pushed to the top by Ivan Stambolić, his college friend, Milošević became the symbol of Serbian nationalism. Described by Zimmermann, the last US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, as "the slickest man in the Balkans", he is generally seen as one of the main reasons for Yugoslavia's break-up, with some going as far as saying that the ethnic conflict he created was merely a political strategy to keep him in power (Djilas, 1993, 95; Gagnon, 1994, 164; Zimmermann, 1995, 3). Milošević ended up being charged by the International Crime Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY, 2001) on 66 charges, including crimes against humanity and genocide. This essay will argue that Slobodan Milošević played a consequential role in the break-up of Yugoslavia through his nationalist discourse and policies and manipulation of state institutions**.** His involvement in the peace process, as a result of his nationalist aim of a "greater Serbia", was also a factor. However, as the nationalist aim of his policies is discussed in this essay, his involvement in the peace process will not be discussed.[1] While this essay mainly examines the ways in which Milošević contributed to the break-up of Yugoslavia, it is important to note that there are many other factors which led to the violent break-up of the country, including but not limited to the "lack of will" of international bodies, historical antagonism from Croatia, and the lack of a successor for Tito. I shall first provide some background on the events and the theoretical frameworks employed in this essay, after which I shall present and analyze the two main ways in which Milošević influenced the break-up, and finally I shall discuss the other factors conducive to the break-up and thus assess how consequential Milošević's role really was.

History of the Conflict

The break-up of Yugoslavia came as a result of historic ethnic conflict fueled by political elites. One can argue that the historic backbone of the conflict was the ethnic homogenization that the Croatian ultranationalist group the ustaše carried through between 1929 and 1945.[2] Josip Broz Tito became the leader of Yugoslavia following the Second World War and

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[1] Further reading on Milošević's involvement in the peace process see Louise Sell, *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Duke University Press, 2002 and Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia,* Penguin Books, 1996.
[2] The ustaše aimed to establish a Croatian catholic state through the ethnic cleansing of Serbs and Jews, and were violently opposed by the Chetnik Serbs (Dulic, 2010, 82-85). This is where the idea that Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims cannot peacefully coexist originated.

managed to install a sense of brotherhood and unity between Yugoslavia's ethnic and religious groups. It is argued that Yugoslavia had three integrative factors: Tito, the League of Communists (SKJ) as a multinational party and the JNA (Yugoslav National Army) as a multinational army (Mesic, 2001, 9). Although it was an authoritarian and dictatorial regime, Tito is seen as a "benevolent dictator" (Shapiro and Shapiro, 2015, 180). However, no successor for Tito was put into place, and thus, Yugoslavia entered a period of crisis after his death. The rotational system of presidency established was not able to handle the existing ethnic tensions, the economy was crumbling, and people became more and more dissatisfied with the regime. Under these conditions did Milošević come to power in Yugoslavia, in 1984 succeeding his friend Stambolić as head of the Belgrade Committee of the SKJ (Sell, 2002, 25). By the beginning of the 1990s, Milošević would have come to control the remaining two pillars that constituted the state. The fall of Yugoslavia thus culminated in 1995, with the Dayton Agreement, following three wars, all arguably caused by Milošević.[3]

Theoretical Framework

The Yugoslav conflict has its roots in the historical antagonism between ethnic groups, exacerbated by the wave of nationalist leaders and their political decision-making at the end of the 1980s, at the forefront of which is Milošević (Dulic, 2010, 94; Gagnon, 1994, 133; Majstorovic, 1997, 170-171; Silber and Little, 1996, 25). Many believe that the world needs to be divided in nations, into groups of people that believe in their common descent, and that "nation-ness is [a] universally legitimate value" (Anderson, 2006, 3; Triandafyllidou, 1998, 595-597). The notion of "other", of a competing ethnic group, is thus inherent to nationalism itself (Triandafyllidou, 1998, 594). While the "otherness" of close states is not usually conducive to violence, during periods of crisis, the national identity can be redefined by political manipulation in direct opposition to the "others" (Oberschall, 2000, 989; Triandafyllidou, 1998, 609). Even though ethnic communities in Yugoslavia lived together and intermarried for a considerable period of time, leader propaganda that exaggerates differences and past conflicts between communities can lead to conflict as a result of "top down manipulated nationalism" (Oberschall, 2000, 984-986; Zimmermann, 1995, 12).

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[3] The three wars are as follows: The war in Slovenia (1991), the war in Croatia (1991-1995), and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992, 1995). For a detailed account of Yugoslavia's break-up, the wars, and the subsequent peace processes, see: Laura Silber and Alan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Penguin, 1996, and Sabrina Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, Westview Press, 2002.

Whereas normally Yugoslavians did not hate each other, Milošević and other nationalist intellectuals and political leader managed to resurrect a crisis frame by instilling fear in people through various means. Thus, ethnic conflict in the case of Yugoslavia was caused by fear, a history-based fear of the "other" ethnic groups instilled by political elites (Gagnon, 1994, 132; Oberschall, 2000, 989-994). To instill fear, Milošević used persuasion as his main technique, and this essay shall show how Milošević persuaded both the masses and politically relevant actors to support him and eventually led Yugoslavia to a state of total war (Gagnon, 1994, 135).[4]

Nationalist Discourse and Policies

Discourse that fueled existing ethnic conflicts

During the 1980s, communist authorities were aware of interethnic tensions in Kosovo, but did not openly debate them (Djilas, 1993, 83).[5] This is when the most defining event of Milošević's political career occurred: in 1987 he was sent by Stambolić, his friend and Serbian president at the time, to calm the waters of the conflict between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs (Silber and Little, 1996, 38). Milošević took this opportunity to fuel the interethnic tensions, appealing to an issue that had been on the Serbian mind for decades: the conflict between them and Albanians, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of Serbs leaving Kosovo (Djilas, 1993, 82). His momentous speech contained elements of Serbian nationalism, stating that: "Yugoslavia and Serbia are not going to give up Kosovo", and "This is your [Serbian and Montenegrin people] country" and invoking elements of King Lazar's speech after the Battle of Kosovo from 598 years earlier (Judah, 2009, 29-30; Milošević, 1987; Silber and Little, 1996, 72).[6]

Milošević began to excite nationalist passion, and, in a fashion atypical to communist ideology, he embraced it, organizing mass nationalist rallies to promote himself as Serbia's leaders, and thus allowed Serbs to go through a process of mass catharsis: the nationalist

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[4] Total war is a civil war between the members of the same state belonging to antagonistic national communities (Montserrat Guibernau, 1999, 125-126).

[5] Demonstrations from Serbs that claimed to be victims of ethnic Albanian genocide in Kosovo were allowed without police interference (Gagnon, 1994, 146-147).

[6] The Battle of Kosovo was one of the reasons why the Serb people cared so much about Kosovo: that was the moment that Serb forces defeated the Ottoman forces that were attempting to invade them.

songs and activities banned during Tito's era all came back, and with the people behind him, Milošević focused on abolishing the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina. At the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Milošević (1989) mentioned the "internal and external enemies […] fomenting national conflicts", emphasizing harmony and unity within Yugoslavia. Nine years later, he said: "We shall win the battle for Kosovo [...] despite the fact that Serbia's enemies outside the country are plotting against it, along with those in the country" (Judah, 2009, 163). Thus, like in Triandafillidou's (1998) framework, Milošević began the process of "othering" both the rest of Yugoslavia, and his domestic opponents early on, instilling fear in the people and presenting himself as the peaceful protector. Milošević avoided direct confrontation: he never publicly attacked or insulted Albanians, Croats, or Bosniaks and only few of his remarks could be considered incitements to war, and yet he still managed to instill hatred and nationalistic passions through his appeal to historic sentiments (Djilas, 1993, 90).

By taking the cause of Kosovo Serbs as his own, Milošević simultaneously brought to light the dissatisfaction of Serbs with their role in Yugoslavia: Serbs believed that even though they were the most numerous republic in Yugoslavia and suffered the most casualties in WWII, Tito's partisans had set the Yugoslavian border in a manner that deliberately diluted Serbian rightful influence in Yugoslavia (Sell, 2002, 41-42). He realized that the best way to escape the wrath of the masses was to lead them in protests, and thus began his strategy of pursuing the politics of fear with the aim of uniting Serbs around him (Djilas, 1993, 87-88). Milošević also made a conscious effort to use short and simple sentences in his speeches so that he could reach as many Serbs as possible (Djilas, 1993, 81; Sell, 2002, 181-182). Milošević began to appreciate his power for the sake of power, not having a clear plan of action but seeing himself as a spiritual leader of the Serbs, having stated in 1992 "For Serbs I am a kind of Homeini" (Sell, 2002, 169-170, 182). Milošević was able to identify all of the issues that Serbs were unable to voice under Tito and use them as uniting factors in his quest for a "greater Serbia". Although his speeches praised peace, Milošević knew that war, the ultimate condition of fear, was his only means of staying in power, and committed himself to gaining territory for a "greater Serbia" (Mesic, 2001, 12; Ramet, 2002, 7; Woodward, 1995, 271-272). By reminding Serbs of their historic grievances, he reached the hearts and minds of his people through fear, reminding them of the threat the rest of Yugoslavia was posing to Serb unity and emboldening them to regain their territory.

Serb-favoring Policies

Appealing to an aggressive version of Serbian nationalism, and with majority in the party organs, Milošević sought to subvert the party leadership in other republics as well and gain power for himself and his followers: first on the list was revoking Kosovo and Vojvodina's autonomous status (Gagnon, 1994, 149; Sell, 2002, 54; Silber and Little, 1996, 58). Kosovo, the poorest region of Yugoslavia, with unemployment thrice the Yugoslav average, had long been disadvantaged by the Yugoslav leadership, having been chronically underfunded by the central government (Sell, 2002, 69). Milošević sent Serbian police into Kosovo ostensibly to protect Serbian people, directly challenging federal authorities, subsequently crushing Kosovo's autonomy at the cost of Albanian lives taken by violent demonstrations, using mob pressure to intimidate Yugoslav federal organs into giving him a free hand (Sell, 2002, 80-84). The repressive measures upon Kosovar Albanians and upon their protests against Milošević's interference strongly favored Serbs in Albania. In Montenegro, the only republic in Yugoslavia, other than Serbia, that supported Milošević, he was able to organize mass rallies that demanded the resignation of the independent Montenegrin leadership (Glenny, 1996, 33; Sell, 2002, 60). Milošević used a combination of pressure from organized street demonstrations and redrafting of constitutional and legal documents to take effective control in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro, reviving a long latent claim that Montenegrins were actually Serbs (Ramet, 2002, 28, 36). Milošević put Montenegrin President Bulatović in charge and expected him to follow all his orders.[7]

Milošević also pushed the Yugoslav Communist Party to revise the party status and allow decisions to be taken on the basis of 'one-member, one-vote', when more than half of the party members were Serb or Montenegrin and thus under his thumb (Sell, 2002, 102; Silber and Little, 1996, 73). In addition, Milošević and the Serbian parliament declared the abolition of the autonomous provinces, but not of their representatives, claiming instead that the Serbian parliament had "inherited" the right to appoint three representatives to the state presidency, to which, under the constitution, each republic's parliament was authorized to send one representative (Ramet, 2002, 7). Milošević also appointed his ally, Borisav Jović, to the presidency of the Federal Presidency only a few days after the Serbian Coordinating

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[7] When Montenegro did not agree to reject a peace plan, Milošević was overheard telling him that he would be fired or hanged, thus confirming suspicions that Montenegro was controlled by Milošević all along (Sell, 2002, 148).

Committee decided to prepare Serbia for a future in which Yugoslavia no longer existed, to be replaced by a "greater Serbia" encompassing the Serbs living in the rest of Yugoslavia (Sell, 2002, 108-109). Jović's militant inaugural speech, whose tone and substance contrasted sharply with the erudite and conciliatory language habitually used by his predecessor, amounted to a declaration of war against Croatia and Slovenia, which only the month before had elected postwar Yugoslavia's first non-Communist governments. In a widely remarked breach of protocol, revealing how the passions aroused by the Yugoslav crisis were eroding the common courtesies of political life, Jović refused to offer the traditional words of thanks to his predecessor (Sell, 2002, 109). Milošević was successful in appointing a Yugoslav president that would support his plans and favor the Serb people above all others and disregard the well-being of the general Yugoslavian population.

Milošević also supported the separatist movements in Croatia and Bosnia politically, financially, and militarily, and promoted their Serb-favoring policies. There is some debate regarding the amount of control Milošević had over the Serb leaders in Croatia and Bosnia: until his split with Karadzić, the Bosnian Serb leader, it is believed that the kin-state leaders were nothing but Milošević's henchmen (Zimmermann, 1995, 18). However, Belgrade's influence varied significantly as the kin-states became increasingly independent and Milošević was not always able to dictate local developments, which is why Milošević eventually overturned Karadzić (Caspersen, 2007, 638; Glenny, 1996, 277-278; Sell, 2002, 229). However, until the Dayton peace talks, Milošević was able to bludgeon Karadzic into agreeing to let him negotiate on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs (Glenny, 1996, 289-290). Thus, through his control of normally independent republics and presidents, Milošević was able to further his "greater Serbia" agenda and implement policies to promote it all over Yugoslavia, including policies that promoted the violent wars which brought its demise.

Manipulation of State Institutions

Milošević relied on several state institutions to spread his nationalist strategies, the most important being the media and the JNA (Yugoslav National Army). To have the power to manipulate these institutions he first engaged in political manipulation to install himself and his followers on position of high importance. Milošević also relied on the Serbian Orthodox Church and well-known intellectuals as vehicles for his Serbian nationalist policies, making

efforts to maintain his relations with them (Oberschall, 2000, 992; Ramet, 2002, 26; Sell, 2002, 112).[8]

Takeover of Serbian Presidency

Milošević's name being put forward to be head of the republican party in Serbia brought about a lot of opposition, with 7 other candidates deciding to run against him. In a meeting with Stambolić, who was suggesting at least the simulation of competition, Milošević declared that he wanted to be the only candidate, and so Stambolić wore down all of Milošević's critics until the vote was unanimous (Sell, 2002, 31). Milošević understood that the only man who stood in his way to supreme power in Serbia and possibly the rest of Yugoslavia was his former friend and patron, Stambolić (Sell, 2002, 32). Milošević used the media to manipulate public opinion against Stambolić and to secretly win his cadres, thus taking the presidency for himself (Djilas, 1993, 89; Sell, 2002, 48). Even though many were against Milošević at first, including the army, by exploiting personal rivalries and confusing different actors about his real objectives Milošević made them too scared to act against him. After removing Stambolić, Milošević stood unchallenged in Serbia. (Sell, 2002, 51-54). He also ousted all moderate communists from the Serb Communist Party (Oberschall, 2000, 992). Milošević and his allies on the presidency blocked Croatian Mesić's ascension to the Yugoslav presidency in favor of Jović, throwing Yugoslavia into a constitutional crisis (Zimmermann, 1995, 11). Milošević now had a firm rule on Serbia and was able to manipulate Serbian and Yugoslav bodies into doing his bidding and thus accomplish his plans of leading Yugoslavia to ethnic war.

National Media

Milošević's control of the Serbian national media, who had the highest ratings, was paramount to his rule and the inflammation of the ethnic conflict (Brosse, 2002; Djilas, 1993, 88; Gagnon, 1994,148; Oberschall, 2000, 992; Sell, 2002, 183; Volčič, 2006, 317-319). The media spewed a daily torrent of violence and enmity (Volčič, 2006, 321; Zimmermann, 1995, 12). Thus, it awoke the fear-based crisis frame by spreading fear anchored in World War II memories, distorting events in Serb history, leading the Serbian people to believe that they were under siege, victims of genocide, and that their neighbors were determined to wipe them

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[8] For a detailed discussion on Milošević's relations with religion and intellectuals, see: Tim Judah, *The Serbs,* Yale University Press, 2009.

out (Gagnon, 2004, 93-96; Milošević, 2000, 112; Montserrat Guibernau, 1999, 126; Oberschall, 2000, 982). The media's narrative was thus legitimized by the manifestations of Serb nationalism, as Milošević would create the threat and then promise to eliminate it, with outright falsehoods being shown by the most viewed shows in order to further legitimize Milošević's nationalist policies (Brosse, 2002; Oberschall, 2000, 992-993). Even if lies were not directly told, Serbian media demonized "the enemy" (Croats and Albanians), reinforced Milošević's "othering" process, instigated violence and confirmed genocide allegations and common Serbian myths such as Albanians raping Serbs (Brosse, 2002; Gagnon, 1994, 151; Gagnon, 2004, 67-71; Glenny, 1992, 994; Volčič, 2006, 322).[9] In both Serbia and Croatia, media completely fabricated war crime stories: "the same victims would be identified on Zagreb screens as Croat and on Belgrade screens as Serb" (Milošević 1997, p. 119).

Even though media in Yugoslavia had always been controlled by the SKJ, under Milošević media subsidies were transferred from the federal budget to the budgets of the individual republics, and thus Milošević was able to place himself at the center of Serbian ancestral myths on all television programs in Serbia (Milošević, 2000, 109-111; Volčič, 2006, 316). The media was fully controlled by Milošević, who appointed sympathetic editors and journalists and fired unsympathetic ones, and promoted coverage of his own rallies (Gagnon, 1994, 148; Human Rights Watch, 1998; Ramet, 2002, 35; Sell, 2002, 183; Volčič, 2006, 317-319). The media's propaganda also had a role in eliminating opposition for Milošević, referring to all of them as traitors or "bad Serbs" (Glenny, 1996, 234; Milošević, 2000, 117; Sell, 2002, 126-127).[10] It also portrayed the US and Europe as enemies, fostering a Serbia-against-the-world attitude in order to discourage the people from watching foreign media sources and to justify why Milošević's actions were not portrayed as positively internationally (Sell, 2002, 184-185). The media's influence was significant: not only was it watched by a vast majority of the population, it was also believed to be true and greatly influenced domestic public opinion.[11] By knowingly propagating lies and fabrications to all Serbs at Milošević's command, the media became one of the backbones of his rule and

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[9] Even while meeting with the Croatian president to agree on a division of Bosnia, Milošević ordered an increased portrayal of Croatia as a ustaše state, broadcasting the bones of thousands of Serb ustaše victims (Gagnon, 1994, 157-158).

[10] Especially when they would run directly against Milošević, as in the case of Milan Panić, an opposing candidate in the 1992 Presidential Elections.

[11] As an example of the media's influence, a poll taken on 9 April 1993, when the regime opposed the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, found that 70% of Serbs were against the plan. An identical survey, taken on 27 April after the regime had come out publicly in support of Vance-Owen, found that only 20% opposed the plan (Sell, 2002, 184-185).

ensured that no opposition or reason would be heard. Milošević knew that he could thus reach a large and receptive audience that would support his policies. The media therefore contributed to both the breakup of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of interethnic warfare, and it has been confirmed by the ICTY that it was being used to propagate the idea of a "state for all Serbs" (Brosse, 2002; Ramet, 2002, 41).

JNA

It is generally believed that the JNA leadership is also a principal culprit in the outbreak of the war, as Milošević would not have been able to launch a war for territory and a "greater Serbia" without the JNA on his side, which, for all intents and purposes, had become Serb rather than Yugoslavian (Mesic, 2001, 7; Silber and Little, 1996, 26). From, the beginning of his time in power, Milošević deliberately adopted a political style meant to appeal to the military, and, as corps were 65% Serbian even before Slovenia and Croatia moved towards secession, Milošević controlled the army by the time the civil war broke out in 1991 (Djilas 1993, 92; Sell, 2002, 121-122). Milošević thus began a restructuring of the army, involving a series of mass purges of generals and top-ranking officers, until only Serbian and Montenegrin officers loyal to the politics of Slobodan Milošević remained and conservative indoctrination in line with Milošević's orthodox ideological terms was stepped up, endorsing Milošević and attacking reformists (Gagnon, 1994, 151; Sikavica, 2000, 149). During the Serbo-Croatian war, the JNA generals agreed to take armed action to stop Croatian attacks against local Serbs without waiting for approval from the Yugoslav leadership: the JNA thus officially became an organ of the Serb republic (Sell, 2002, 136-137). The JNA's complicity in the plan for a "greater Serbia" was not simply dictated by its predominantly Serbian composition. Over 60 per cent of Yugoslavia's military industries were based in Bosnia, most in Croat or Muslim regions. Without Bosnia, the JNA had no means of sustaining its bloated officer corps, and Milošević had made it clear to the military leadership that Serbia had no intention of offering it security (Glenny, 1996, 151). Thus, the JNA needed to win the war in Bosnia and gain Bosnian territory for a "greater Serbia". In addition, elements of the JNA were angered by Tudjman, seeing him as a reincarnation of the ustaše and trying to unseat him. The JNA was thus driven even closer to Milošević, seeing in him an opportunity to move against Croatia (Sell, 2002, 121-122). Milošević's control over the JNA was not simply the result of a great manipulation on Milošević's part, as the JNA had its own agenda. Still, the fact that Milošević came to control it is undeniable and constitutes an important factor that contributed to Milošević's fueling of ethnic tensions and instigations of war in

Yugoslavia: without the guarantee of military power, Milošević would not have escalated to violence, and ethnic conflicts could have been solved peacefully.

Discussion

Milošević did not engineer the break-up of Yugoslavia single-handedly, as his discourse, manipulations, and policies would not have succeeded without reinforcement from other actors (Ramet, 2002, 7).

<u>Lack of Focus and Tact of International Actors</u>

The "collective spinelessness" of international institutions and powers was one of the defining reasons why Yugoslavia's break-up was so drawn out and involved so much hatred, violence, and loss of life (Gow, 1997, 44; Ullman, 1996, 59; Woodward, 1995, 379). Because of the Cold War, the Yugoslav crisis found itself on the back burner of the international diplomatic agenda, as powerful states were overwhelmingly preoccupied with their own interests (Williams, 2001, 274). The US Secretary of State did not visit Yugoslavia until 1991, one week before Slovenia's secession, when it was too late to stop the conflict, and European governments did not take effective action for years due to the principle of non-intervention (Montserrat Guibernau, 1999, 162-163; Sell, 2002, 144; Ullman, 1996, 5; Zimmermann, 1995, 12). Even when it did come, the Western approach to the Yugoslav crisis was not balanced, as it recognized Bosnia just one month after it had declared independence without any consideration for the rights of Serbs there and disregarded Muslim responsibility for the crisis (Djilas, 1993, 95). Thus, the international community mainly blamed Serbs for the conflict, and thus reinforced Milošević's narrative that enemies were trying to disfavor Serbs (Djilas, 1993, 95; Gow, 1997, 93). The major powers also did not agree on the parameters of a permissible outcome or how to achieve it, which slowed the obtaining of a ceasefire: the US saw the war as an act of aggression by Serbs, while Europe saw it as an ethnic conflict (Woodward, 1995, 6-7). The UN also exacerbated differences between powers by frequently amending the mandate and originally resisting armed intervention (Woodward, 1995, 10).

The Western intervention aimed at mediation but instead escalated the conflict to war, as it redefined the war as a nationalist revolution and reinforced the authority of the communist

nationalist leaders who won in the first democratic elections through propaganda and weakened the support for their opponents. It also abandoned the Yugoslav federal government, undermining its capacity for autonomous resolution, depriving Yugoslav citizens of the last protections for their individual right, redefining the struggle for statehood as a struggle for international recognition (Woodward, 1995, 198). The European Community's intervention, which changed the shape of the crisis, came as a result of the nascent common foreign and security policy, at a time when Europe wanted to exercise the indecision in the gulf war from a year before (Gow, 1997, 47-49). The conflict on the ground carried the burden of containing the conflict that diplomacy could not achieve (Gow, 1997, 99). As a result of the lack of coherence in the international approach, the Dayton Accords were a failure for the international community, as they got fewer concessions than they could have gotten two and a half years prior (Gow, 1997, 8-9). Instead of representing a soundly researched collective effort to engineer lasting peace in the area, at Dayton the West was just trying to find the most efficacious and easiest way to achieve their stated goals (Ramet, 2002, 277). The representatives of foreign powers were also accused of not knowing much detail about the peace plans (Sell, 2002, 207). Thus, the international community's efforts to contain the conflict and limit violence actually exacerbated it, their misguided efforts improving Milošević's legitimacy and their indecisiveness prolonging the violence.

Historical Antagonism between Serbia and Croatia

The antagonism from Croatia and Slovenia also played a role in the break-up of Yugoslavia. The nationalist question in Croatia came much earlier than in Slovenia but was dormant until Franjo Tudjman's electoral win as president in 1990 (Cviic, 1996, 129-131). Croat nationalism in particular was similar to Milošević's nationalism and came as a reaction to Milošević's attempts to turn Yugoslavia into a "greater Serbia" (Djilas, 1993, 93; Oberschall, 2000, 992; Silber and Little, 1996, 84). Tudjman and Milošević's nationalisms converged on the issue of dividing Bosnia, due to Milošević's plans for a "greater Serbia" and Tudjman's belief that the Western part of Bosnia belonged to Croatia, neither caring about the future of Bosnia itself but rather about their separate interests (Sell, 2002, 119, 252). Milošević's raising of tensions and incitements to war were encouraged by Tudjman's naivete and desire to extend Croatia's borders (Mesic, 2001, 11). Tudjman presided over serious violations of the rights of Serbs, who made up 12 percent of the population of Croatia (Zimmermann, 1995, 7). It is important to note that just as nationalist sentiments were manipulated through

the media by Milošević, Croatian media was also under direct control of Tudjman's party, with anti-Serb propaganda and Serb demonization regularly on Croatian TV in order to ignite Croatian nationalism (Gagnon, 2004, 155, 159, 166; Glenny, 1992, 994; Milošević, 2000, 113; Silber and Little, 1996, 85). In direct opposition to Serbian sentiments, Croatia saw itself economically discriminated against by the ruling class in Belgrade with the excuse that Serbia needed compensation for WWI losses, underrepresented in the Yugoslav state and local administration, army, and police, and felt like it had lost the autonomous status that the Austro-Hungarian empire had promised it before Yugoslavia was formed (Cviic, 1996, 124). There was also a fear of assimilation from Serbs who had double the population of Croatia and denied Croatia's right to a separate national identity (Cviic, 1996, 125). If the Croats had a more rational and tolerant national ideology they could have tried to solve their national question peacefully, yet both sides of the conflict went to extremes (Djilas, 1993, 94; Glenny, 1996, 90). The Serb creation of the "other" in the Croat identity would not have been conducive to conflict if the Croatians would have not responded in the same fashion.

Lack of Successor for Tito

Tito's inability to designate a successor was also a reason why nationalist movements gained popularity and instigated violence: Tito left Yugoslavia too decentralized for any ethnic group to dominate (Zimmermann, 1995, 3-4). The post-Tito Yugoslav elite was unable to handle the economic, political, and social challenges that were present in the country, and the lack of consensus between leaders led to the ability of opposition voices, which were suppressed during Tito's regime, to rise up (Ramet, 2002, 8; Sell, 2002, 28). In the 1970s, Tito politically expelled all leading reform-minded communists in Serbia, politically paving the way for Milošević to seize power in the absence of any strong opposition (Djilas, 1993, 85). Milošević extended Tito's fear-based communism and took Tito's example of control of institutions and through his combination of nationalist discourse attempted to unify the Serb people in his search for a "greater Serbia" (Djilas, 1993, 87). Had Tito left a more centralized and powerful leadership, Milošević would have been unable to gain control of institutions such as the JNA.

Conclusion

Slobodan Milošević played an integral role in the break-up of Yugoslavia through his nationalist policies, discourse, and manipulation of state institutions. However, the break-up of Yugoslavia was also caused by other factors, such as the inefficiency of external intervention, the Croatian response, and the lack of a viable successor for Tito's unifying rule. Although some sort of conflict in Yugoslavia was unavoidable, Milošević's own character and ambitions, both for his people and himself, strongly influenced the degree to which violence and hatred developed between ethnic groups in Yugoslavia in the last decades of the 20th century. Milošević played upon historical divisions and grudges to lead his people to war. Through his discourse and policies, it is apparent that Milošević did not always have the well-being of Serbs in mind and prioritized his plans of a "greater Serbia". The power conferred through his takeover of the Serb presidency and, through his cadres, of the whole Yugoslav leadership went hand in hand with his complete control of the media and the transformation of the JNA into a Serb body of action. Still, had there been more decisive involvement from international bodies, less antagonism from Croatia's leadership or a more centralized body of governance after Tito's demise, Milošević's actions would not have such violence in Yugoslavia's disintegration.

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