

Correlation of War in the Former Yugoslavia with the Conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine

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Abstract: The paper considers the broader social context of the wars in the territories of the former states of SFRY and the USSR. The war in the former Yugoslavia resulted in enormous human casualties, material destruction and refugees. The essential reasons consist in major centuries-long confrontations between countries on ethnic and religious grounds. Objective indicators indicate that there are permanent contradictions in interstate relations, as well as risks of conflict recurrence. It is obvious that there is a correlation between the post-Yugoslav war and the wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the current one in Ukraine. The conflicts are a consequence of the aspirations for the formation of national-states, the triumphalist policy of the great powers and the efforts of the United States and its allies to control the territories of the former socialist republics. The fact is that the institutions of the international community are not able to resolve numerous contemporary conflicts in the world, so their radical reorganization is necessary.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, war, casualties, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine.

Introduction

During the Cold War, the key words that guided Western thinking were Marxism vs. market economy, people's democracy vs. liberal democracy, wars of national liberation vs. colonialism, development vs. economic imperialism, etc., reflecting a world in which geopolitical bipolarity served as a framework for intellectual dialectic.

Today, the word "destruction" is floating on everyone's lips, a word that is hardly adequate to cover the absence of an analytical concept that could understand the reality of international relations; recognition of impotence. There are no more poles, no fixed reference points: national and local economies are disintegrating, state structures are collapsing. Developing countries are obviously the ideal arena for observing these phenomena: Somalia, Liberia and many others.

The disappearance of the bipolar system of international relations really affected the developing countries, but its disappearance also brought chaos to the very heart of Europe. The question of nationality, and therefore identity, which everyone believed lay buried beneath the layers of civilization, suddenly rose again. Endowed with antiquated political systems and economies too weak to accept this sudden change, the

countries of Eastern Europe had to take the difficult path towards the Western model. Some, perhaps more fragile than others, like Yugoslavia, disintegrated into violence.

Whether in situations characterized by bipolarity or chaos, when conflict breaks out, there is an urgent need for the intervention of an external, neutral and independent player. Every armed conflict brings with it a certain degree of structural collapse: the state, which concentrates all its resources on the war effort, becomes weaker; may lose control of parts of its territory to insurgents or foreign forces; the safety of the population is no longer ensured, not only because of the war, but also because in such circumstances state or parastatal institutions can no longer function and assume their protective role. The result is a long and too often silent stream of victims looking for food and shelter, trying to protect themselves from the abuse they are the target of: theft, rape, arrest, execution.

The humanitarian action draws the strength of its commitment to work for these victims from the compassion that everyone feels at the sight or thought of the accidents suffered by fellow citizens. The aim of the humanitarian action is to provide the victims of the conflict with a certain measure of protection, to give them help if they need it and to start a dialogue with the warring parties in order to convince them to show due respect to all those who no longer have the minimum degree of freedom to which each an individual has the right to live with dignity.

This is why, at the end of the last century, states adopted a body of law – international humanitarian law – which aims to protect all those who do not or no longer participate in hostilities: civilians, wounded and sick, prisoners. This set of rules has been revised several times and today includes the four Geneva Conventions from 1949 and their two Additional Protocols from 1977, with more than 185 member states. But this prescriptive law has no value unless it is respected by members of the international community, that is, by the states themselves, in the absence of any international police force responsible for bringing offenders to justice. States also wanted to give an independent organization the dual role of guardian of this law and protector of victims of armed conflict.

The long, already two-decade duration of the transition in Serbia, its spiral, at times even involute course requires analyzing the basic, deep lines of internal divisions and splits, but also a set of external factors that determine, to a considerable extent, the course and effects of previous divisions and conflicts, so will development. At the same time, the central, regulative role of the political sphere in transitional societies simply imposes the question of how to transfer and rework key social divisions and differences into political projects, disputes and conflicts.

Major social and political changes in Eastern Europe in the second half of the 1980s also had an impact on Yugoslavia. The country witnessed an economic crisis followed by a political crisis, after Slobodan Milošević came to power in Serbia. In the late 1980s, discussions among Yugoslav elites focused on the future of the federal states. Two camps can be identified. One was represented by Slovenians and Croats and advocated further decentralization of decision-making in order to overcome the economic crisis and ensure stability. The other camp, including Milosevic and his allies in Montenegro and the two autonomous Serbian provinces, Vojvodina and

Kosovo and Metohija, advocated greater centralization to overcome the economic crisis. Since no agreement was reached by 1990, Slovenia and Croatia opted for independence, and Macedonia and Bosnia followed suit. The result was an outbreak of violence, first in Slovenia and Croatia, and later in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yugoslavia ceased to exist in 1991, but the political situation in the area remained unclear until 1995, when the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia. As a result of this agreement, five countries finally established themselves on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. These were Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro) and Macedonia. Montenegro declared its independence in 2006, and Kosovo and Metohija, which has been governed by the United Nations (UN) since 1999, made a declaration of independence in 2008. Resolution 1244 of the UN is still in force. Today, there are six successor states of the former Yugoslavia that are members of the UN.

In the post-Soviet area, we single out the conflict in Georgia, as well as the decades-long conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the current war in Ukraine. Here, we note that the wars in Georgia and Ukraine have no religious basis, considering that all the conflicting states mostly belong to the Orthodox world. The Armenian-Azerbaijani wars in Nagorno-Karabakh and the aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine are particularly significant, which are the main topics of our text. Russia's aggression on Ukraine, called "Special Operation", is globally reminiscent of the aggression of the 19th NATO country on FR Yugoslavia in 1999. The similarity in interpretations is the protection of the minority population, Russian in Dombas and Lugansk, that is, Serbian in its own province of Kosovo and Metohija. In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, a province with a majority Armenian population that exists as part of Azerbaijan, but supported by Armenia, which has dominated that area since the victory in the previous war. The Russian Federation behaved with restraint and was mostly neutral, given its friendly relations with the warring parties, to which it regularly sold weapons.

Evident Russian aggressiveness in the post-Soviet area begins in the South Caucasus, as an expression of the secessionist aspirations of their compatriots. With the end of the civil war in Georgia in 2008, the provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia were partially separated, which became de facto independent, internationally unrecognized states in conjunction with the Russian Federation. In the following years, a carefully prepared conflict is activated in the Republic of Ukraine, which traditionally represents the "Soft Belly of Russia", that is, the direction of attack on the USSR and Russia. In 2014, Moscow annexed the Crimean peninsula, part of the Ukrainian state, as a former territory. It is a strategically essential area, where the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Army is stationed, and the agreed term of use has expired. It must be noted that by mutual agreement from 1994, Ukraine left the nuclear club, because it handed over its atomic weapons to Russia. Until the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine, along with Belarus, was an independent member of the United Nations. Tensions between the Kiev authorities and the Russian population in eastern Ukraine in Dombas and Luhansk have produced armed conflicts with separatist trends, supported by official Moscow. This is followed by peace agreements in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, the violation of which caused the aggression of the Russian Federation from

February 24, with a possible world conflict and global cataclysm. The Ukrainian war is essentially a reflection of the concept of Americanization of the planet, the center of which is the classic global conflict between the USA and Russia. In the following text, we will focus on the constant conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh with the visible presence of major powers and the potential focus of a larger war in Central Asia.

Wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia: causes and repercussions

There are many different, and mutually opposing, opinions about the causes of the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There are also different opinions on whether the collapse of that state was inevitable or could have been avoided. Finally, opinions also differ on whether the reason for the disintegration should be sought in the action of internal or external political factors. The answer to all these complex questions requires in-depth historical research that goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, we will try to, in the shortest terms, provide some kind of concise answer to all these questions.

According to Richard Holbrooke, there are five main reasons for the collapse of Yugoslavia: “first, the wrong reading of Balkan history; second, the end of the Cold War; third, the behavior of the Yugoslav leaders themselves; fourth; the inadequate American response to the crisis; and finally, the wrong belief of the Europeans that they can meet their first challenge after the end of the Cold War alone” (Holbrooke 1999: 21-22).

In the early 1990s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was one of the largest, most developed and most diverse countries in the Balkans. It was a non-aligned federation consisting of six republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. In addition to the six republics, two separate regions of Kosovo and Metohija and Vojvodina had the status of autonomous provinces within the Republic of Serbia. Yugoslavia was a mixture of ethnic groups and religions, with the main religions being Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism and Islam.

Coinciding with the collapse of communism and the resurgence of nationalism in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yugoslavia experienced a period of intense political and economic crisis. The central government weakened while militant nationalism grew. There was a proliferation of political parties that, on the one hand, advocated the complete independence of the republics, and on the other hand, sought greater powers for certain republics within the federation.

Political leaders have used nationalist rhetoric to erode a common Yugoslav identity and incite fear and distrust among different ethnic groups. By 1991, the country had disintegrated, and Slovenia and Croatia blamed Serbia for unfairly dominating the Yugoslav government, military and finances. Serbia, in turn, accused the two republics of separatism (International Tribunal... Indictment 2001: 18).

Since the creation of the first Yugoslav state in 1918, this multinational state has always had strong national tensions that are partially responsible for the fragmentation of the state during the Second World War. The historical mistake at that time was that

the Slovenian and Croatian people did not realize their desire for independence, because such an act would avoid conflict and bloodshed. The state created after World War II (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – SFRJ) tried to reconcile these tensions by dividing the state into 6 republics within a federal structure, but with a strong central government. All republics, with the exception of Slovenia, had significant minority groups. The cohesion of this country was strengthened by the strict one-party rule of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the repression of national and political dissidents. However, in 1974, a new constitution was adopted that promoted decentralization and gave significant power to the republican authorities. During the 1980s, national tensions grew, and federal power weakened in the face of the growing assertiveness of the republics. This process accelerated significantly with the end of one-party rule in 1990 and the holding of multi-party elections in all 6 republics. (Ilić 2001: 51)

Nationalist parties (DEMOS in Slovenia, and the Croatian Democratic Union in Croatia) fared well everywhere, and in Slovenia and Croatia the new governments began to exert pressure in the direction of confederation, and eventually independence. The actions that led to the collapse of the federation were met with strong resistance in other parts of Yugoslavia, especially in Serbia, both in Croatia and in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Serbian people. Croatia's movement towards independence was met with strong resistance by many Serbs from Croatia (who made up 11.5% of Croatia's total population of 4.5 millions) who, at the end of federal Yugoslavia, experienced a change in their status from the largest national group in federal Yugoslavia to a national minority in Croatia. In this way, Slovenian and Croatian requests for independence were met with warnings from Serbia that, if these republics change their state's international borders, Serbia will in that case try to change the internal borders and thus preserve the large Serbian communities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The leaders of the Serbian enclaves in Croatia have made it known that, if Croatia chooses independence, they will demand that the internal borders between the republics be redefined and that areas with a majority Serb population secede from Croatia and be annexed to the Republic of Serbia. Serbia supported this request, arguing that the right to self-determination cannot be limited exclusively to Croatia and Slovenia (although Serbia denied this right to ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo in southern Serbia) and that Slovenia and Croatia, through a unilateral and unconstitutional declaration of independence, are demanding the revision of the internationally recognized borders of the Yugoslav state, which is a far more radical step than the revision of the internal borders, which do not have such recognition.

One of the specifics of the Yugoslav wars (and especially the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) is "ethnic cleansing". The expert group of the United Nations under the leadership of Sherif Basiouni defines "ethnic cleansing" as "the ethnic homogenization of an area by the use of force or intimidation, with the aim of removing persons of another ethnic or religious group from that area." Ethnic cleansing, in addition to murder, expulsion, imprisonment, torture, sexual violence, destruction of property, educational or religious institutions of an ethnic group, and other measures of violence and intimidation, also includes some "softer" measures,

such as “restriction of freedom of movement, removal from positions of power in local government and police institutions, dismissal from work, denial of medical assistance and arbitrary searches of apartments”. In short, we could say that “ethnic cleansing” represents a set of all violent and non-violent measures by which members of an ethnic group are forced to leave a certain geographical location or area. Basiuni’s expert team concludes that “all conflicting parties have committed ‘serious violations’ of the Geneva Convention and other violations of international humanitarian law.” These violations include the killing of civilians, rape, torture, and the deliberate destruction of civilian property, including cultural and religious property, such as churches and mosques. But, nevertheless, there are significant qualitative differences. Injuries were committed by Serbs against Bosnian Muslims. Another group of victims were Croats, while the perpetrators were Serbs from Serbia, BiH and Krajina. Bosnian Muslims and Catholic Croats also victimized and committed crimes against Serbs in BiH and Croatia. (Ilić 2001: 52)

Since the foundation of Yugoslavia after the First World War, its various peoples have constantly pondered the question of their identity and wondered how they could possibly live together. The Slavs who moved to the Balkans centuries ago were attacked and occupied either by the Austro-Hungarians (Croatia and Slovenia) or the Ottomans (Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia). Bosnia and Herzegovina was repeatedly attacked and occupied. Croats and Slovenes converted to Catholicism; Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians agreed to the Orthodox Patriarchate; while those Bosnians who remained neither Catholic nor Orthodox converted to Islam. Royalist between the two world wars and socialist after the Second, Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in violence in 1991.

So, in addition to the declarations of independence made by one side or the other, the struggles between these different peoples were marked by the extreme ferocity and hatred that is too often seen in civil wars. The drive to eliminate “outsiders” from what is considered one’s own country has led to the most atrocious behavior. Their mere presence on “their” land served to define their own national identity in a negative way. Consequently, the “outsiders” had to leave so that the majority could live in total security. The nationalist propaganda of the various belligerents used these ideas to motivate their troops. Almost three million people left their homes or were displaced by the fighting in the former Yugoslavia. Refugees or internally displaced persons must now start building a new life.

From Serbian Krajina in Croatia to the ethnic and religious mosaic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, all possible means were used to evict “outsiders”. First of all, the force of arms came. The armed conflicts in Croatia started with the blockade of the barracks of the joint army, and one of the barracks that was in the blockade was the barracks in Vukovar, so the JNA army unblocked the barracks and that conflict spread to the entire city, which suffered considerable damage. Sooner or later armed conflict leads to the creation of front lines, and undesirable minorities are left stranded behind them. All three sides had POW collection centers. It took three years of latent, low-level conflict to complete the job, during which local forces used all the means at their disposal: violence against individuals, administrative harassment, unjust laws. No protection, no dignity, no future. (Birch 2001: 18)

Already present during the short-lived hostilities in Slovenia in 1991, ICRC delegates went to Croatia as soon as the first clashes between Croats and Serbs broke out. They quickly realized that this inter-ethnic violence is contrary to the values that international humanitarian law aims to defend and promote. Consequently, their efforts to protect minorities who were imprisoned, deported or executed proved an almost impossible task. The strategy of the warring parties was precisely to deny the minorities: through terror, atrocities and refusal to recognize them as human beings, drove them out of any kind of dignified existence.

On June 25, 1991, the Republics of Croatia and Slovenia unilaterally declared independence, after they failed to reach a confederal solution or their independence through negotiations. The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) sent additional units to Slovenia, where fierce fighting soon broke out. They withdrew after the agreement was signed in Brioni on July 7. At the same time, JNA reinforcements were sent to those parts of Croatia where Serb-populated enclaves clashed with Croatian forces, after they established self-proclaimed "Serbian Autonomous Regions" in late 1990, which refused to be recognized by the Croatian authorities and began to demand annexation with Serbia. They justified these moves by pointing to the constitutional changes in Croatia that reduced their status from one of the constituent nations to the status of a national minority. They also pointed to various moves by the authorities that evoked memories (exploited by nationalist media and politicians) of persecutions and mass murders of Serbs under the fascist government of the Independent State of Croatia, established with German and Italian help, during the Second World War. Armed conflict in Croatia soon spread to the border areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On September 7, 1991, when the peace conference opened under the auspices of the European Community, Serbian paramilitary formations and JNA units gained control over almost a third of the territory of the Republic of Croatia, and Yugoslav federal institutions largely ceased to function. This development of events was marked by the breakdown of law and order in many areas. (Artman 2001: 51)

The war on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was just starting to flare up, and the entire environment was engulfed in war conflagration. From October to December 1991, the SFRY authorities occupied the territories above Dubrovnik (up to Slano). Having made it impossible to threaten the municipality of Herceg Novi, the SFRY/FRY authorities decided to withdraw from the Dubrovnik battlefield. This left the territory to the now internationally recognized Republic of Croatia, and the only thing left in dispute is the Prevlaka belt. After painful mediation negotiations, both sides decided to resolve the dispute by non-conflictual means – through negotiations between the Republic of Croatia on the one hand, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (the two-member federation Serbia and Montenegro) on the other. Therefore, on September 6, 1992, an agreement was signed on the withdrawal of the troops of the FRY Army from the Dubrovnik battlefield, as well as an agreement on the peaceful resolution of the dispute over the entrance to the Bay of Kotor. That process included: the withdrawal of the forces of the Yugoslav Army towards the FRY, the bringing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces to the disputed area of the entrance to the Bay of Kotor, the demilitarization of the wider border zone and the

beginning of the normalization of relations on both sides of the disputed area. Based on Chapter VII of the Charter, the UN Security Council passed Resolution No. 779 of October 6, 1992, which confirmed the obligation of the parties to the dispute to leave the territory militarily, simultaneously placing Prevlaka under UN supervision. The mandate of the mission was renewed every six months based on the decisions of the UN Security Council, until there were political turns on both sides. The demilitarized zone was divided into two areas. The police forces of the parties to the dispute stayed in the yellow one, while the observation missions of the international forces were carried out in the blue supervision. (Stanković, Milosavljević 2014: 272.)

Numerous cease-fires were negotiated under the sponsorship of the European Community, all of which were ineffective until a permanent cease-fire came into effect on January 3, 1992. This ceasefire allowed the development of plans to establish a UN peacekeeping force (UNPROFOR) in the conflict zones in Croatia. The new Yugoslav state, consisting only of the republics of Serbia and Montenegro, was proclaimed in Belgrade on April 27, 1992. Croatia and Slovenia obtained general international recognition, with admission to the UN membership, on May 22, 1992.

The 1991 census in Bosnia and Herzegovina found that Muslims (recognized as a nation during the 1960s) were the largest national group in the republic (43.7% of the population), while Serbs made up 31.3% and Croats 17.3% (the rest of the population declared as “Yugoslavs” or other nationalities). These three national groups were neither concentrated in homogeneous areas nor evenly distributed throughout the republic, although some areas had a clear majority of one of these three nations. (Birch 2001: 20)

In the multi-party parliamentary elections held in Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 1990, the majority of seats in the parliament were won by parties representing the three main nationalities. These are: the Democratic Action Party (SDA), which had support in the Muslim community, the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which is the sister party of its namesake from Croatia. Each received as many seats in parliament as their share of the general population, according to the 1991 census. The seven-member presidency, which was then elected by the parliament, included representatives of all three parties, as well as the government. The leader of the SDA, Alija Izetbegovic, became the president of the Presidency. The problems of reaching a consensus between the 3 national groups became acute to the extent that the breakdown of the old federation became inevitable with the declaration of independence by (and with the conflict on the territory of) Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991. (Artman 2001: 51)

In October 1991, the Muslim and Croat members of parliament adopted documents that paved the way for the republic's secession from the Yugoslav federation. Most of the Serbian representatives had previously left the session. According to a report published in the British Financial Times on October 16, 1991, Radovan Karadzic, head of the SDS, said that the adoption of those documents put Bosnia “on the same road to hell as Croatia and Slovenia.” SDS leaders protested that in important political decisions, such as those concerning the organization or sovereignty of the republic, representatives of one nationality should not be outvoted by the association of others.

Muslim and Croat politicians in the republic continued to push for independence and in December 1991, the Presidency submitted a request for diplomatic recognition by the European Community. Defending the decision to request independence, in a TV interview, the President of the Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, stated that “our choice was whether we want to be independent and equal or to be part of a Greater Serbia” (in the news of TANJUG, the official Yugoslav news agency, December 22, 1992. In another TANJUG report, dated December 31, he indicated that his leadership was in favor of some kind of loose Yugoslav confederation).

In January 1992, SDS politicians proclaimed the creation of the “Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (later abbreviated to: “Republika Srpska”) and declared that the proclamation would be realized if Bosnia and Herzegovina were recognized as an independent state. Through this declaration, the leadership of the SDS obviously wanted to exclude the possibility that the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina inhabited by Serbs (including those where they were in the minority) would leave the Yugoslav federation. At the same time, they stated that they no longer consider the Bosnian president and the minister of foreign affairs to be legitimate representatives of the Serbian people from Bosnia and Herzegovina abroad. They also accused the Muslim and Croat national communities that by their decision to continue towards independence (forcibly pushing the Serbian community into their declaration), they are actually destroying the foundation on which that federal unit was created. However, the leadership of SDS continued to formally participate in republican bodies. (Artman 2001: 52)

Later, in January 1992, parliamentarians from SDA and HDZ voted for a referendum on the independence of the republic, in order to satisfy the condition of recognition set by the EC. Some HDZ members later expressed certain reservations regarding this decision. The SDS leadership refused to recognize the legality of this decision because it was not approved by the entire assembly, and therefore did not have the consent of all three nationalities. The day before the referendum was to be held, Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the SDS, declared that there is no referendum for Serbs and that they will neither prevent nor obstruct it. Then he again proposed the division of the republic into ethnic cantons as a solution to BiH’s problems. Muslim leaders opposed the cantonization of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which was widely discussed by all sides) with a letter, advocating a unitary state. Croatian leaders, both in BiH and in Croatia, were in favor of cantonization, but they reduced their public support for it in order not to harm their relations with the Bosnian government. The Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman, denied accusations that a secret agreement was concluded between the Belgrade and Zagreb governments on the division of BiH between Croatia and Serbia, to the detriment of Muslims. (Birch 2001: 25)

Referendums on independence were held on February 29 and March 1, 1992. Local SDS authorities refused to cooperate, so polling stations remained closed in many places. According to the published results, 63.4% of people with the right to vote participated and 99.4% of the votes were for independence. After that, President Izetbegovic declared the republic independent and asked for international recognition. Tensions between national communities increased significantly after the referendum and a whole series of violent events took place in which armed civilians, police and

paramilitaries of different nationalities took part. Serbs and Muslims erected barricades after a Serb was killed during a wedding in Sarajevo on March 1, 1992. The violence quickly spread throughout the republic. In mid-March, there were serious battles between Serbian territorial forces and Croatian forces around Bosanski Brod. Serbian leaders began to implement their declaration of a Serbian republic within BiH through measures such as the reorganization of police districts in the areas they controlled. On March 31, they stated that the Bosnian government would not have control over these police districts and would apply its own laws. On April 7, they declared the independence of the “Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. (Bielasiak 1997: 45)

Members of Serbian paramilitary units allegedly killed at least 27 people, mostly Muslim civilians, in Bijeljina on April 1 and 2. The Bosnian president announced the general mobilization of the Territorial Defense (reserve military force organized by each republic). At that time, the Bosnian government controlled TO units only in Muslim-majority areas. The forces of the TO were later expanded by a government decree that theoretically brought all armed forces in the republic under its control. In practice, this meant the incorporation of members of Muslim paramilitary units, since the JNA and Serbian paramilitary units did not obey the Government. Croats largely organized themselves into forces organized by the HDZ. The TO forces were mostly composed of Muslims, but they also had a certain number of Serbs and Croats who were loyal to the Bosnian government.

The European Community and the USA recognized BiH’s independence on April 6, 1992. Two members of the SDS presidency resigned on April 8, citing the decision to mobilize the armed forces as the reason (they were later replaced by non-SDS Serbs). Members of the SDS also left all positions in the government. After the international recognition of BiH’s independence, the fighting quickly spread throughout the republic. JNA troops, mobilized Serbian reservists and Serbian paramilitary units soon took control of large parts of the territory (more than 60% of the republic, according to some reports). The JNA was very present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily because many of its units arrived in Bosnia after the withdrawal from Slovenia and Croatia. JNA troops in Bosnia soon began to be seen as supporting the Serbian leadership in Bosnia, even though they were supposed to intervene and stop the fighting between armed groups of various nationalities. On May 4, the Yugoslav Federal Presidency in Belgrade announced the withdrawal of the JNA from Bosnia within 15 days, although soldiers originally from Bosnia will be able to stay. Only a small number of troops were withdrawn, while most of the men and equipment remained and were actually transformed into the army of the “Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina”. (Artman 2001: 53)

Several paramilitary groups originally from Serbia, but with the obvious presence of new members from Bosnia, fought with Serbian forces (mobilized reservists and transformed JNA) in Bosnia. Some of them were claimed to have been present before the beginning of serious fighting. Similarly, a large number of Croatian paramilitaries, members of the HOS (Croatian Armed Forces), which is connected to the extreme right-wing Croatian Party of Rights in Croatia, were claimed to have been in western Herzegovina as early as January 1992. From the very beginning of the fighting, the

ranks of the HOS were filled with many Muslim volunteers. It should be said that the dominant Croatian political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina also contributed to the destabilization of that republic, primarily by insisting on the creation of a separate, predominantly Croatian territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its close relations, until its annexation with the Republic of Croatia. Namely, it was largely about the synergy of the dominant Croatian parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Namely, the HDZ, which was the main and influential political party in Croatia, had as one of its proclaimed goals the realization of the “sovereignty of the Croatian people” and the “inalienable right of the entire Croatian people, within its historical and natural boundaries, to self-determination up to self-secession” as well as the realization of the “economic-traffic and spiritual-civilizational association of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which form a natural, indivisible geopolitical entity and which are destined for unity by historical destiny”. In Bosnia, on the other hand, HDZ BiH was the main political party of Bosnian Croats in the Republic of BiH. One of the proclaimed goals of the HDZ BiH was to “ensure the right of the Croatian people to self-determination up to the right to secede”. (Artman 2001: 53)

The “Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna” (HZ H-B) declared its existence on November 18, 1991, claiming that it is a separate or clearly defined “political, cultural, economic and territorial entity” in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of its goals was to establish closer ties or unity with Croatia, as shown by the use of Croatian currency and the Croatian language in HZ BiH and the granting of Croatian citizenship to Bosnian Croats by Croatia...On August 28, 1993, HZ H-B declared itself the “Croatian Republic of Herceg Bosnia” (HR H-B), headed by a president and a vice-president. The international community never recognized either HZ H-B or HR H-B, and the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared HZ HB illegal on June 14, 1992.

The Croatian Defense Council (HVO) is the main Croatian military force in Bosnia. Officially it was composed of Croats from Bosnia, including people who were allowed to leave the Croatian Army to fight in Bosnia as volunteers. However, there are numerous reports of strong ties between the Croatian Army and the HVO, as well as Croatian Army units or soldiers fighting with HVO insignia. The HVO had a complicated alliance with the TO of the Bosnian Government and seemed to be mainly occupied with the defense and expansion of the territory of the “Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna”. However, already in October 1992, the HVO attacked Bosnian Muslims in the Prozor municipality. This was followed by an armed conflict between the HV and the HVO with the armed forces of the Government of BiH, which ended in February 1994, with the signing of the Washington Agreement. During the conflict, the HVO, for example, in April 1993, began a series of attacks on Bosnian Muslim civilians, such as the attack on Ahmići on April 16 and other places in northern Bosnia. At the same time, on April 17, 1993, the forces of the Croatian Army and HVO attacked the villages of Sovice and Doljane (Jablanica municipality) and forcibly relocated the Bosnian-Muslim population and destroyed their property. At the same time, in April 1993, in the Herzegovinian municipalities of Stolac, Capljina and Mostar, the HVO began arresting prominent Bosnian Muslims and introducing various measures of persecution of the Bosnian Muslim population, such

as dismissal from work and public positions, discrimination in the distribution of humanitarian aid, attacks on property and houses, and the imposition of the Croatian language and education. On May 9, 1993, the HV and HVO began a major military offensive against the Bosnian-Muslim population of Mostar and the positions of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the city, thus causing the beginning of an armed conflict with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the municipality of Mostar. Then followed a widespread campaign of violence against the Bosnian Muslim population in parts of Mostar under the occupation of the HV and HVO, which lasted at least until the ceasefire and peace agreements in February and March 1994. On the other side of the conflict line, the part of the city that held by the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was under siege by HV and HVO forces, which intensively shelled the area and prevented the arrival of humanitarian aid and basic foodstuffs.

The war on the remnants of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, separated from Yugoslavia, drew ethnic and confessional borders between: the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a Bosniak majority, the Republic of Herceg-Bosna in which the majority were ethnic and national Croats, and the Republic of Srpska in which the majority of the population consists of ethnic and national Serbs. In June 1995, Serbs controlled 72% of the territory of the former Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ahead of the negotiations on the future status of BiH, Republika Srpska was recognized as an object of international law, so that its interests became an integral part of the future international solution. In Dayton, the statehood of Republic of Srpska was confirmed as a member state of the complex state-like creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which managed to preserve international legal subjectivity through the peace treaty. (Stanković 2021: 32)

Mostar is the city that suffered the greatest destruction during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the world's attention was drawn to Sarajevo, which was besieged by Bosnian Serb forces from the very beginning of the war until NATO airstrikes on Bosnian Serb positions around Sarajevo in August 1995, Srebrenica was a protected zone under UN Resolution 819, and according to that resolution it had to be demilitarized, but that decision was not implemented, so Muslim forces left the protected zone and committed crimes in the surrounding Serbian villages (1992, 1993). In 1995, the army of the Republika Srpska with General Radislav Krstić entered the protected zone of Srebrenica and after that a crime was committed against the captured Muslim soldiers. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the signing of the peace agreement in Dayton in November 1995.

There are many definitions of the term political propaganda depending on the author and the relationship to the political conviction. Organized political persuasion is called political propaganda. There is practically no human activity that is not influenced by propaganda, and this name implies very different concepts. Therefore, it is not unusual that in defining the term propaganda, there are as many definitions as there are authors who confirm that definition. This concept is primarily burdened with an ideological, but also an emotional attitude, which individuals, as well as social groups, have in their understanding of its essence. Propaganda is primarily a value-neutral concept, while political activity that is not due to propaganda has a specific target. The

following definition is suitable for this occasion and topic: “Political propaganda is a planned and organized activity for the creation, presentation, dissemination of political content, attracting people and ensuring their support for a certain political content and its stakeholders.” (Bielasiak 1997: 49)

Propaganda is the creation and dissemination of ideas and attitudes in order to create readiness for a certain course of action. Propaganda is any kind of planned and organized activities that are carried out with the aim of influencing the attitudes, opinions or feelings of the public, groups or individuals, with the intention of obtaining the ideas, attitudes and program of the social and political organization that carries out this activity. This term comes from the Latin *propagare* (spreading, propagation, multiplication). Propaganda is, therefore, a type of communication that is carried out in order to convince the recipients of the message. The ultimate goal of political propaganda is to directly or indirectly encourage individuals to participate in the political activities of a certain political party, in the manner and to the extent determined by the political entity itself. Propaganda primarily affects people’s attitudes, emphasizing in this way: that attitudes are a kind of predisposition for behavior or a latent structure that directs behavior in situations when an individual is faced with an objective attitude. Along with propaganda influence, the most common effects are achievements in the field of strengthening positions, the effect of mobilizing already formed attitudes, as well as the crystallization and formation of a new attitude. Political propaganda is therefore a deliberate and planned (organized) activity that has the task of changing or maintaining certain political attitudes of individuals, social groups or society as a whole. The goal of propaganda is to influence the way people think and behave. Propaganda produces certain socio-psychological consequences and tends to penetrate the deepest layers of the human psyche and to act on segments that most often cannot be rationally controlled. (Bieber 2006: 45)

Years after the conflict in the Balkans, voters in the countries of the former Yugoslavia continue to elect people convicted or accused of war crimes, which shows that nationalism is still very influential in the political environment. The field of politics is formed, with all its specificities, on the basic lines of social cleavages. Social cleavages are not just any, but only the deepest, structural lines of social differences around which systematic and permanent divisions are organized.

The central field of the political-sociological approach to the analysis of parties and the party system is precisely the nature and character of the connection established between the social soil and its (modified) party-political expression. There is a high degree of agreement regarding the initial assessment of the relevant, but multiple mediated, effect of the structure of society, primarily the key lines of social divisions and cleavages, on the shaping of the political space. Complex (and decomposed) societies will, as a rule, also have a complex and dynamic party scene. The key question, however, is whether each, even numerous and relevant, social group will be in a position and able to articulate and express their interests and find their political representative. Especially since the numerous lines of social divisions – class, class, national, gender or generational – are intertwined, dynamic and give very different

constellations of relationships. Various interest matrices and value structures also rely on them. (Bieber 2006: 47)

The specific set and combination and changing hierarchy of social cleavages and derived party-political constellations often resemble a withered Rubik's cube in terms of complexity and variability. Social cleavages and political divisions, however, can in principle be found in three types of mutual relations. The first, the most favorable for stabilizing and consolidating democracy, is the presence and dominance of crossed, weakly interconnected lines of divisions and cleavages that lead to the establishment of pluralized, "divided" identities, that is, a small risk of global polarization and confrontation. Quite the opposite, mutual addition, accumulation and strengthening and concentration of lines of divisions and cleavages (social-class, national and cultural-value) leads to a divided, dual society. A deeply divided society constitutes, at least in principle, the most unfavorable social framework for the stable functioning of democratic institutions.

The third type of relationship, the overlapping of autonomous cleavage lines, has no direct connection and consequences for the development and expansion of democracy. Stating, rightly, that not all social differences, divisions and splits and their political operationalization are in a "friendly relationship" with democracy, Kevin Deegan Krause puts forward two initial plausible hypotheses. The first, that for democracy, interest-rational conflicts and splits are "better" than identity-ideological conflicts. The second, complementary, is that democracy is easier to deal with crossed, and thus fragmented, than with overlapped and especially cumulated and strengthened conflicts that lead to political polarization.

In the early 1990s, in an environment of war and isolation, under the rule of SPS and Milošević, a society of deformed and largely "blocked transition" was formed. Parallel to the process of rapid and radical devastation of the economy and "destruction of society" characterized by the impoverishment of the lower and "melting" of the middle classes – the downward, regressive social mobility of the majority, an "elite of blocked transition" is established. Since, unlike other post-communist societies, there was no regime change, the dominant process within the political elite is (only) reproduction of its former composition, with the inclusion in its ranks of a number of members of the leadership of opposition parliamentary parties. And the economic elite was then predominantly recruited, by capitalizing on business and political connections and acquaintances, from a wider circle of members of the former socialist nomenclature – their relatives, descendants and close friends. Practically, under the formally more or less unchanged, predominantly state-supported ownership structure and blocked transition – "while the blockade and sanctions last", the process of deformed "wild privatization" took place. By melting and devaluing social-state property and its (hidden) transfer into private hands, the process of converting political and economic power into private ownership was practically (informally) completed.

Milosevic's Serbia is an almost paradigmatic example of Weber's concept of political capitalism, that is, the politically controlled and sponsored creation of an economic elite, "getting rich with the presence of the government". The large, quickly acquired fortunes of post-socialist tycoons – national patriots, were created not within rational

calculations and market strategies, but through rents and subsidies – state monopolies, systemic privileges, import-export quotas, speculation with multiple exchange rates, as well as smuggling scarce goods within “gray” and “black” economies (arms, human and drug trade). Instead of profit orientation, the fight for subsidies dominates, instead of competition on the market, members of the “economic elite” compete for mercy and trust in “political kitchens and corridors”.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, wars in Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine

There is no doubt that there is a multidimensional coincidence of wars in the territories of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, abbreviated SFRY and USSR. It also implies many differences as a reflection of the specifics of internal construction and the international position of the observed creations. First of all, according to their internal political structure, these were countries outside the capitalist bloc. At the same time, the SFRY, i.e. the former Yugoslavia, was a non-aligned country, the founder and first-class member of the “Third World”, that is, the Non-Aligned Movement, but with an autochthonous socialist self-governing system. This produced permanent controversies in relations with the great powers and their bloc allies. Constantly in the second half of the twentieth century, periods of cooperation, marked tensions and compromises in correlation with East and West alternated.

The common context in the existence of these communities is the existence of a large number of diverse peoples, ethnic and minority groups. The given structure of the population resulted in constant anomalies that were suppressed, reduced and controlled by the administrative measures of the state leadership. Numerous methods of coercion and concessions were applied in order to prevent conflicts and separatist tendencies. On the scene were inter-ethnic and inter-religious contradictions, significantly inspired by the great powers. Until the disintegration of these Federations, the then authorities successfully suppressed every attempt at armed conflicts and secessionism. Western capitalist countries, led by the USA and the United Kingdom, constantly sought and strongly supported the change of the socialist political order in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the USSR began at the end of the 1980s with the continuation of anti-communist processes in the allied countries, and was formally and legally completed in 1991, with the international recognition of the newly created former entities. There is an obvious difference in the methodology of the disintegration of the analyzed communities. In the federations of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, members of the socialist camp carried out this peacefully, according to adequate generally recognized normative acts. In contrast to the aforementioned, a brutal armed war took place on the territory of the former SFRY with catastrophic consequences in the form of a huge number of human victims, material damage and long-term international confrontations. The bloody five-year wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina manifested all the weaknesses of the former common state. On the scene was an ethno-national and inter-religious civil war, that is, a large-scale conflict, channeled by the West with unfathomable repercussions.

The similarity of the conflicts in the discussed former Soviet and Yugoslav states is manifested in the following period. In the Russian Federation at the end of the nineties, long-term civil wars broke out in Chechnya and Dagestan, with huge casualties. Almost at the same time, the latent conflict in Kosovo and Metohija escalates, which ended with the brutal aggression of the NATO pact, without a decision of the United Nations Security Council and contrary to all provisions of international law. State violence was carried out by the USA and its allies against a sovereign state, for the purpose of the hegemonic interests of that superpower and its Western satellites. At the same time, it also represents the continuity of the triumphalist overseas policy of this megapower in the unipolar world, which produced wars in the projects of its own elite. There is an obvious coincidence with the organization of armed uprisings by members of the Muslim population, that is, terrorist actions by Chechens, Dagestanis, Ingushetia, Tatars and others. The similarity of the conflicts is in the implementation of the “Colored Revolution” phenomenon, with the aim of replacing illegitimate regimes in the world, which was successfully implemented in the Republic of Serbia in 2000 and in Ukraine, especially since 2014. Taken as a whole, it is a strategic project of the USA to control the space of Eurasia and Siberia, as well as the Russian Federation, where 3/4 of the world’s natural resources, including energy, are necessary for the country’s long-term perspective.

The interior design of Armenia is based on a multiparty system. According to the Constitution, Armenia is a pre-democratic democratic republic. The presidential system of executive power represents the second pillar of socio-political organization of the country. The head of the Government is the President of the Republic. The executive is in the hands of the Government, and the legislative is under the authority of the government and the parliament. The declared goal of the Armenian government is to build a Western-style parliamentary democracy. How the criticism of Armenian politics comes from the West is the very way to the ultimate goal of democracy. However, through the time of the position of Armenia, it has improved and according to the latest estimates, this country is designated as “partly free” (partly free). In foreign policy Armenia is extremely active and has good relations with almost all countries of the world except with two immediate neighbors: Turkey and Azerbaijan. Armenia is a participant in the NATO Partnership for Peace program and is a member of the NATO organization called the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). At the same time, Armenia was given the Collective Security Organization (CSTO) along with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Azerbaijan has a multiparty system with a one-way parliament and a pronounced presidential system. The President of the Republic is also the Prime Minister. The state arrangement of Azerbaijan, with the pronounced role of the president, modeled on the political power of the former secretary general of the party, is similar in that segment from the state of the Soviet Union. Despite the introduction of a multiparty system, the characteristics of the supreme authority did not change significantly.

Azerbaijan’s foreign policy is completely different from the situation in the internal politics. Azerbaijan is an open country that maintains diplomatic relations with 174 countries of the world. Due to the territorial dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia is the only neighbor with which Azerbaijan has no diplomatic relations.

Among the independent states of the Caucasus, apart from Russia, Azerbaijan has the largest foreign-political radius of activity. In addition to membership in the United Nations, Azerbaijan is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, the OSCE, the NATO Partnership for Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, the World Health Organization, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Council of Europe, the Democratic Community, the IMF and the World Bank. In addition, Azerbaijan is also a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Commonwealth of Independent States and one of the founders of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM. The main priorities of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy are: peace and stability in the region, as well as the development and implementation of transport and cooperative projects. An EU-oriented foreign policy signifies Azerbaijan as an integral part of the European continent, because from the point of view of Azerbaijan, the European Union is more based on cooperation and partnership than on the old model of political influence and domination.

Russia undertook diplomatic efforts to stop the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh within the Minsk Group¹ and then unilaterally and bilaterally in cooperation with Turkey, previously presenting the conflict as internal. Russia did not want to ruin the previously achieved relationship with Ankara, especially related to Syrian issues as well as military-technical cooperation issues. Given the size of the Armenian diaspora in Russia,² cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as the Russian military presence in the Armenian Shirak province, this attitude did not diminish the importance of Armenia for Moscow. On the other hand, along with economic and energy ties, Azerbaijan represented an example that state independence in the post-Soviet space does not automatically have to be anti-Russian. The first formalized diplomatic activity of Russia was released on October 1st and October 5th with the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, France and the USA, through joint statements demanding an immediate ceasefire and the opening of the negotiation process. Apart from the short-term ceasefires, this initiative was not successful, partly because of the “undermining” of Turkey, and partly because of the negative attitudes of the parties in the conflict towards the activities of the Minsk Group. Russia is intensifying its diplomatic activities after this failure, with the controlled involvement of Turkey at the initiative of Azerbaijan. This action resulted in the Ceasefire Agreement signed on the November 9th by Russia and both sides of the conflict, with the support of all regional and world actors. The “nine-point agreement” provides for:

- Ending the conflict from November 10 and keeping the parties in their current positions;
- Returning Agdam district to Azerbaijan by November 20th;

¹ The Minsk Group was established within the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) in 1992, with the aim of encouraging a peaceful solution for Nagorno-Kabakh. The presiding countries are Russia, France and the U.S. It includes the following participating states: Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Belarus and Finland also participate in the work.

² Depending on the source, data on the number of the Armenian diaspora in the Russian Federation range from 1.3 to as many as 2.5 millions.

- Deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces along the separation line and in the Lachin Corridor;
- Gradual deployment of Russian peacekeepers with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Nagorno-Karabakh, for a mandate of five years with the possibility of extension;
- Establishment of the Center for Peacekeeping Forces to monitor the implementation of the Agreement;
- Returning Kalbajar to Azerbaijan by November 20th and Lachin by December 1st, creating a new transport corridor between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia with a period of three years, as well as the safe development of traffic and communication through the Lachin Corridor in both directions;
- Return of internally displaced persons and refugees, with the participation of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees;
- Exchange of prisoners, wounded persons and bodies of victims;
- Freeing and establishing new transport and economic corridors in the region, including those between Azerbaijan and its exclave of Nakhchivan.

Russia then signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Turkey (which is not a signatory to the Agreement) that provided for the establishment of a Joint Monitoring Center, which was supposed to monitor the ceasefire, and at the initiative of Russia, be located far outside the conflict zone. With this, Turkey is militarily and technically involved in the post-conflict processes, although at a much lower level compared to what Azerbaijan demanded, which requested that Turkish peacekeepers be deployed in the field as well. Russia has secured a primary position in the region, with immediate control of the South Caucasus corridor as a crucial geopolitical, trade and energy link between Europe and Central Asia. The cease-fire agreement imposed a much greater range of obligations on the Armenian side, especially in the aspect of returning previously controlled territory, which led to serious turbulence and political unrest in Yerevan, which can still be felt today to some extent. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, saw territory events and the Agreement as a great victory, as well as a great step towards returning Nagorno-Karabakh to its own sovereignty. Some solutions of the Ceasefire Agreement are very similar to the so-called the Madrid principles (OSCE Minsk Group 2007/2009), especially those related to regain part of the territory to Azerbaijan which is in Armenian control, but they were never realised.

The policy of President Donald Trump was focused on foreign policy issues of American interest, such as the relationship with Russia and China. In addition, the upcoming presidential election required maintaining a balance between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities in the US. The US has a built-in relationship with both sides in the conflict. Joint military exercises are organized on Azerbaijani territory, and many American companies are present in the Azerbaijani oil industry. On the other hand, the Armenian community in the USA is politically very active (Gregg 2002: 21), although there was a temporary cooling of relations in 2010 due to the sale of Armenian weapons to Iran.

From the beginning, the USA emphasized the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh as an international one, and kept its diplomatic activities within the Minsk Group. US restraint on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been harshly criticized, and Russia and

Turkey have proven that conflicts can be resolved without major US involvement, damaging the US's reputation as a global power. The US supported the November 9th Agreement as an effort to stop humanitarian disasters and create the preconditions for a political solution, and called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to support the efforts of the Minsk Group by promising them financial assistance in the reconstruction process. The US has become involved in monitoring the ceasefire in an effort to downplay Russia's role in ending the conflict. The agreed position of the Union is support for the activities of the Minsk Group. While Germany (chairman of the EU Council at the time) directed the parties to the conflict towards processes within the Minsk Group, France as one of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group criticized Turkey for including Islamic warriors from Syria in the conflict. The anti-Turkish policy resulted in the adoption of the Resolution by a convincing majority, first by the Senate on November 23rd, and then by the National Assembly on December 4th, where the Governments advocated for the recognition of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. The adoption of the Resolution was the result not only of lobbying by the Armenian community in France, but also of strong anti-Turkish messages, among other things, due to the arrival of Sunni warriors in the conflict zone and alleged war crimes against Armenian soldiers and civilians, which is why French political representatives demanded an international criminal investigation, and the parliamentarians pointed out in point 5 of the Resolution that "there is an emphasized need for the defense of minority Christian communities in Europe, in the East, but also throughout the world".

The EU welcomed the Ceasefire Agreement as the first step towards achieving a sustainable political solution for Nagorno-Karabakh and invited all actors to join the processes within the Minsk Group. She expressed her readiness to provide finance for reconstruction as well as to be the coordinator of peace operations. Due to its own weak foreign policy and the disunity of the member states, the EU remained only a relatively passive observer.

Conclusion

The declaration of independence of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991 was the beginning of the end of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was followed by three major armed conflicts: in Croatia (1991-1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) and Kosovo (1998-1999). In addition, three smaller conflicts were fought in Slovenia (June-July 1991) and in the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (January-August 2001). Those conflicts were marked by severe violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law, the likes of which have not been seen in Europe since World War II. They are particularly associated with the establishment of the term "ethnic cleansing" and left behind hundreds of thousands of victims, many of whom are still without compensation for war damages for the pain they suffered.

The legacy of a violent past still hangs over the region and threatens the full enjoyment of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The lack of political vision, and until recently the determination of states to deal with human rights violations in the past, leads to the individual search of thousands of victims for the

truth and compensation for damages, as well as unsuccessful domestic proceedings on war crimes, while some of those accused of war crimes are still in prison. True inter-ethnic trust and lasting peace in the region of the former Yugoslavia cannot be achieved without justice.

Post-war justice is not only judicial and retributive, aimed at punishing those who have committed crimes through a fair trial. It is primarily restorative and preventive, aimed at providing a legal remedy for victims and aimed at ending impunity, as well as ensuring that all people in the region accept the past and live in peace and security in cohesive, pluralistic democratic societies. The means that could be used for these purposes are both judicial and non-judicial, such as prosecution initiatives, truth-seeking processes, reparations programs, institutional reforms, or a combination of all of the above.

The Caucasus region, and especially the South Caucasus, represents the geopolitical hub of the interests of the great powers, the intersection of the influence of various religions, has traditionally been the longest within the framework of Russian statehood, while the peoples of this region have a series of mutual unresolved conflicts, which together represent a great challenge for the stability and prosperity of this region. The Caucasus region includes the southern and northern Caucasus. The North is under the auspices of the Russian Federation, while the Southern Caucasus consists of three independent states: Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. For the most part of the Modern epoch, the Caucasus region belonged to imperial Russia and the USSR, and this fact has its consequences even today, in the face of the great Russian political, cultural and economic influence in the region. In the post-Cold War period, Azerbaijan and Armenia became members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) where Russia is the most influential. In this area, there is a great expansion of the influence of Turkey and Iran as significant regional powers.

During its history, Georgia has found its support for Russia, with which it also connects civilizations, but through Saakashvili's regime relying on the United States, as well as the conflict of interest with Moscow on the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, came, at least temporarily, to the opposite geopolitical position of Russians. By the war in the Caucasus in 2008, and subsequent exit from the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as by the approaching NATO, Georgia was further distancing itself from traditional cooperation and civilization closeness with Russia. Armenia, as historically, and culturally close to Russia, continues this tradition, while Azerbaijan, having different historical experiences with Russia, with certain civilization diversity, occupies a compromise position with Moscow.

EU relations with Azerbaijan are regulated by the Agreement on Cooperation signed in 1996, which came into force in 1999. In May 2009, the EU officially launched the "Eastern Partnership", which allowed for greater financial support and cooperation between the EU and the former Soviet republics, despite the great Russian influence. A new phase in the development of relations between the EU and the countries of the South Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, was launched at a Prague summit in May 2009.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of key regional and international actors. First, the temporary change in the “aggregate state” did not provide answers to all the imposed questions about this South Caucasian area. A relatively acceptable and sustainable solution for all parties, which depends on the key regional and global actors of international relations and much less on the participants in the conflict, is still a distant goal. Russia wins a diplomatic victory as an indispensable authority without whose involvement no issue in its wider environment can be resolved. Its greatness is reflected in the acceptance of the document on the termination of the armed conflict, which is a product of Russian diplomacy, the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces and the establishment of control over key points in the region, as well as the reduction of Turkey and other actors of international relations in the post-conflict phase. The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, in addition to other open territorial and political issues at the global level, indicates the loss of US power. Russia assumes responsibility for maintaining the achieved peace, with the provision that the reconstruction must be supported by multilateral programs of the OSCE, the EU or the UN. Through the mediation of Azerbaijan, Turkey achieved that important issues in the region are not resolved without its participation, that is, by the Minsk Group. Moscow made it possible for Turkey to monitor compliance with the obligations of the Agreement because it assessed that Turkey’s controlled role in the post-conflict period was significant. The US has shown significant vulnerability in relation to the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh. Two key factors have influenced the restraint of the US, namely the new policy of President Trump and the upcoming presidential elections. The EU showed a partial weakness, first because it did not impose itself as a relevant actor in solving the crisis, and because it failed to establish the unanimity of the member states on this issue, which caused damage to its credibility. Azerbaijan, as one of the participants in the conflict, managed to recover parts of its territory, while Armenia suffered significant losses. Considering that the return of territories to Azerbaijan was foreseen earlier in the negotiations on the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the document from Madrid, it indicates that the control of the Armenian forces over the entire conflict territory was not even a realistic outcome. The most important guarantee for the Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh is the Russian peacekeeping forces on the ground. The result of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is thousands of dead and wounded members of the military as well as civilians on both sides, destroyed infrastructure and homes, and thousands of refugees and displaced persons. When we look at the dimensions of the destruction and the fact that a final political solution is very far away, as well as the possibility that the frozen conflict will escalate again, it seems that both Armenia and Azerbaijan are at a loss. Therefore, it is necessary to start the negotiation process as soon as possible among the relevant actors of international relations in order to conclude a permanent solution as soon as possible. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan seem to be on the losing end. Therefore, it is necessary to start the negotiation process as soon as possible among the relevant actors of international relations in order to conclude a permanent solution as soon as possible. both Armenia and Azerbaijan seem to be on the losing end. Therefore, it is necessary to start the negotiation process as soon as possible among the relevant actors of international relations in order to conclude a permanent solution as soon as possible.

Global crises, be they financial, general economic or health, point to new conceptual elements of globalization. Without a developed public health safety culture, and without lessons learned from previous pandemics and epidemics, different countries applied different measures. And while certain states were more affected than others regardless of the actions taken, what is common to almost all states is that the economy takes the biggest hit. Therefore, almost all countries adopted programs of measures that related to economic activities in new, very difficult, business conditions. The first-class problem is the current war in Ukraine as a product of the permanent global conflict of great powers and triumphalist politics, primarily the USA and the Russian Federation. It is followed by enormous destruction, brutal sanctions and an economic collapse that affects all European countries.

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