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European Conflict Management – Growing up in the Balkans

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Exercise *Solo Flight*

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War in 1989-1991 marked the beginning of a turbulent decade within Europe, and the Balkan region became one of the main stages. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) collapsed and disintegrated, breaking into a number of new and independent republics. Each of those developments appeared differently and though none of the subsequent states achieved their independence without warlike confrontations, the scope and dimension each experienced was unlike the other and with different intensity.

The occurrence of those wars in the Balkans ultimately triggered a reaction from the international community in order to prevent further bloodshed on the European continent. Various international institutions and organizations took part, of which the European Community (EC) and later the European Union (EU) played an important role. Though also the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and especially the United States of America (US) were involved to varying degrees, this essay will focus on the analysis of the European mechanisms for conflict management that grew out of the Yugoslav experience.

In 1991, the effects of the German reunification and the experiences of the lack of coherence of the international community in the Gulf Crisis forced the EC into a phase of

redefinition of its role in world politics. [1] As a result, the main European states and institutions were occupied with the search for future shape of the European security system when the crisis in Yugoslavia developed.[2] When analyzing the reaction and the conflict management of the EC/EU, from the war in Slovenia in 1991, to Macedonia in 2001, a progression of skills and successes is evident. Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), consolidated in the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) as one of the three pillars of the EU, was created as the framework under which those foreign affairs that all member states agreed upon could be followed with one voice. This essay will analyze both the successes and failures of the EC/EU's crisis management during the wars in the Balkans in the 1990s. It will assert that the EC/EU achieved only limited success and was responsible for various failures in preventing further conflict escalation. Moreover, the EU persistent commitment to non-interventionist principles, without thorough analysis of the problems at stake, was partially responsible for the way in which the wars in the Balkans unfolded under the crisis management leadership of the EC/EU. Finally, the paper will cover the issue of Europe's conflict management as part of the CFSP from the disintegration of the SFRY in 1991, up to the Macedonian Conflict in 2001.

[1], Andrew Cottey, *Security in the 21st Century Europe.* 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 93.

[2] Sonia Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to the Yugoslav Imbroglio," in *European Approaches to Crisis Management,* ed. Knud Erik Jorgensen, 35-63(The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997), 35.

Roadmap

The last ten years of the 20th century were the most dynamic time in the young history of the EU and has spawned a complex and multifaceted literature covering everything. This essay will therefore concentrate only on the essential events, discussions and decisions, having a direct effect on and during the crisis in the Balkans.

This paper will first provide an overview of the relevant institutions and outline the status of European conflict management or prevention mechanism in 1990 as starting point of the further development towards the EU's Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Then, for the background of the case study, a quick summary of the history of the Balkans and the processes leading to the disintegration of the SFRY will be presented in order to develop an understanding for the hesitant posture of Europe to the developing crisis.

Next, the evolution of events in the Balkans, with a focus on EC/EU's actions and positions, will be provided. This will be achieved by structuring the argument chronologically in synchronicity with the individual wars in the Balkans. The section will, where applicable, include the positions and agendas of the major powers in Europe and their transatlantic relationships, as long as it is relevant to the aim of this essay. In the end it will become clear which mechanism of conflict management/prevention the EC had at the beginning of the 1990s and how these developed in synchronicity with the maturation of the EU up to 2001.

Though the wars in the Balkans are interconnected, the individual conflicts appeared generally separate from each other and therefore provide the analytical opportunity to analyze Europe's reaction and measures one by one. General observations will be presented first, while specific reactions will be integrated chronologically. In each case the reactions or decisions which are linked to each will be assessed. Finally, regarding the example of the last war on the Balkan, the Macedonian War in 2001, the results of the development within the 1990s will be analyzed.

Although September 11th 2001 marked the advent and perception of a completely new international security environment, effects of this significant event on the ESDP will not be covered by this essay. Similarly, though the genocide in Rwanda occurred within the timeframe of this essay, it will not be mentioned unless specific reactions of the EU can be linked to the events in Africa.

Background and Context

Introduced in 1970, the European Political Cooperation (EPC) consisted only of periodic meetings with government leaders or their representatives from the member-states aiming at the establishment of common positions on issues of foreign policy. Though there had been no provisions regarding the EPC in the original EEC Treaty, the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the EPC evolved as a forum within the EC to address common

concerns, specifically on non-economic matters.[3] Its nature was informal and followed established intergovernmental procedures and protocols.

With the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986, which effectively was the first revision of the Treaty of Rome, two major aims were implemented. The first, here less important, was to set an objective for the EC of establishing a single market by end of 1992. The second was the institutionalization of the EPC, which was eventually superseded by the CFSP with the Treaty of Maastricht (1992).[4] Though the desire to strengthen the foreign policy pillar was apparent, the CFSP remained intergovernmental. Setting up the EPC secretariat was one of the main elements of the SEA, ensuring consistency in the day to day work. With Maastricht, the EPC Secretariat was merged with the EU Council Secretariat which became "an important body maintaining CFSP institutional memory."[5] It was much more than a traditional body for administration, logistics and the preparation of decisions. Internally it was referred to as the CFSP unit.[6] The further strengthening of the Council Secretariat can be seen as a reaction to the experiences of Bosnia and later, Kosovo. The relevance and importance of the Council Secretariat had constantly increased through the 1990s. As part of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which was signed 1997 and became effective 1999, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was launched. The post of the High Representative (HR) was

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[3] Daniel T. Murphy, "European Political Cooperation after the Single European Act: The Future of Foreign Affairs in the European Communities," *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* Volume 12, Issue 2, Article 2, (1989): 338. http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/iclr/vol12/iss2/2.

[4] Ana E. Juncos, *EU foreign and security Policy in Bosnia* (Manchester: University Press, 2013), 23.

[5] *Ibid*., 25.

[6] Hylke Dijkstra, "Explaining Variation in the Role of the EU Council Secretariat in First and Second Pillar Policy-Making," *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 17, no. 4 (May 2010): 538. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13501761003673526.

instituted, making the CFSP even more effective, coherent and visible to both EU Member states and the international community.[7]

By March 2001, as a result of the Nice European Council in 2000, the Council Secretariat also became the EU's source of military expertise through the establishment of the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and the Joint Situation Center (SITCEN), providing strategic advice to the HR, who acted from 1999 on as chief negotiator on behalf of the EU Council.[8] Javier Solana was the first HR.

The historic Path to the Disintegration of Yugoslavia

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was founded after World War II under the authoritarian communist leadership of Josip Broz Tito, who had been able to unite the ethnicities of Yugoslavia in the larger fight against the fascist regimes of Europe. It was initially based on the political model of the Soviet Union (USSR) but broke with the USSR in 1948 and developed more and more to a neutral position between the East and the West, even rejecting membership to the Warsaw Pact. As founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, Tito distanced Yugoslavia from both major power blocs. Yugoslavia's economy was centrally backed by Western credits and assistance, aiming at reinforcement of federal institutions and the union of the SFRY against eastern influence. While Tito had been able to compensate for the weakness of the federal state through his personal authority until his death in 1980, ethnic tensions and

[7] *Ibid*., 538.
[8] Fraser Cameron, *An Introduction to European Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 2007), 30.

separatist activities were increasing subject to political and dissident manipulation up to 1990.[9] With the decline of communism, all Yugoslavian republics held multi-party elections in 1990 resulting in a clear vote for more autonomy and less central influence, which was only opposed by Republics of Serbia and Montenegro. At the same time, Yugoslavia lost geo-strategic importance to its Western supporters and subsidies and economic assistance from the West declined, specifically from the United States of America (USA), resulting in a worsening economic situation for the central government. With the first indication of a developing crisis, the EC brought its soft power instruments to the table, offering economic assistance or holding out the prospect of membership or association. Though, while these negotiations were still undertaken with the federal government of the SFRY, the increasing aim for autonomy in some republics became irreversible, leading towards the first of the Yugoslavian Wars, the Ten-Day or Slovenian Independence War in the summer of 1991 and simultaneously to the start of the Croatian War of Independence. [10] The focus of this analysis will be on European involvement.

Slovenian and Croatia – Disappointment following Success

Though open hostilities between ethnic Serbs and Croatians within Croatia had already occurred in late March 1991, the dissolution of the Yugoslavian Federation was in full swing when Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence on June 25th 1991.

[9] Marc Weller, *Peace Lost – The Failure of Conflict Prevention in Kosovo* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008), 8.

[10] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 66.

This conflict on the European continent was quickly viewed as a 'European problem' by the United States as well as the United Nations.[11] At the same time, European states saw an opportunity to take a step out of the superpowers' shadows and test the foreign policy machinery of the EPC/CFSP. As representative of the EC Presidency, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister, Jacques Poos, prematurely announced 'the hour of Europe' and took charge of the management of the expanding conflict in Slovenia. [12]

Just one day after the declaration of independence, the federal Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) started to take vital positions within Slovenia. On June 27th 1991 the first shots were fired, helicopters were shot down and people were killed. The EC reacted very quickly and although a first ceasefire agreement was developed on June 29th, it did not come into force until July 3rd. The EC had prepared an arrangement which was presented to the warring parties of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and the federal Yugoslav government. The resulting agreement, the so called Brioni Declaration, ended the Slovenian Independence War and was seen as a diplomatic success for the EC. One essential part of the treaty was that Slovenia and Croatia had to suspend their declarations for independence for three months, in order to give the EC opportunity to generate an internal consensus for further actions or settlements. There are disputes about the true effectiveness of the Brioni solution, because it did substantively deal with the conflict in Croatia.

[11] Cottey, *Security in the 21st* …, 65. and Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 36.
[12] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 36.

There the fighting continued until the end of 1995. The setting of the conflict in Croatia was far more complex than in Slovenia. Susan Woodward argues that the main flaw of an effective EU crisis management solution was the lack of understanding of the causes of the conflict in Croatia. [13] On the other hand, Slavenka Drakulic claims that the West just perceived the crisis in the Balkans as an ethnic conflict with little effect on the national interests of the western states, and in addition, that the Balkans were not regarded as being really part of Europe and its inhabitants were viewed as lesser Europeans, not deserving to be helped.[14] This perception gave Western states and institutions sufficient justification for non-intervention, a fundamental mistake in the developmental phase of the conflict. The result of this initial position was 'intervention as a reaction' to the tensioning conflict, with the scope of 'too little, too late.'[15]

Once the West had decided to take the conflict seriously, states disagreed on the resolution methods or even aims of intervention. In the early months of the crisis, two issues were primarily disputed: recognition policy towards those republics aiming for independence and the possibility of a military option.[16] Well in advance of the deadline of the three month suspension of the declarations of independence, the EC scheduled a Peace Conference on Yugoslavia in September 1991. In preparation for the conference, the EC set up the Arbitration Commission on the Conference on Yugoslavia (commonly known as the Badinter Commission), which was supposed to provide legal advice to the

[13] Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy – Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1995), 20.

[14] Slavenka Drakulic, *The Balkan Express: Fragments from the other Side of War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 2.

[15] Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* …, 147.

[16] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 37.

conference.[17] The principle attitude of the EC, the US and the USSR, as well as the CSCE, at the beginning of the conflict was that the inter-republic disputes should be solved within the framework of the SFRY. The EC/EU emphatically expressed their preference and offered incentives like the prospect of a closer integration into Europe.[18] This unity did not last long. The conference itself lacked consistency and can be regarded as ineffective.[19] One of the reasons was the internal divisions over the recognition policy. Although the members of the EC were very keen on keeping a common position, this stance was torpedoed by Germany which had just gained its unity through the right of self-determination.[20] Triggered by rising domestic pressure, Germany's government anticipated a stronger international involvement for the resolution of the conflict in Croatia.

Eventually Germany succeeded in its effort to convince the EC to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, albeit not with arguments but with the leverage of risking the perception of European cohesion just after the Maastricht Treaty had been agreed on.[21] With this, especially from a Serb perspective, the conference lost its neutrality and credibility and could not be concluded.[22]

Another reason why EC crisis management failed at this stage of the conflict in Croatia was the clear lack of willingness to use military force. From the outset, it was obvious that the members of the EC were avoiding militarily involvement, each for

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[17] Roland Rich, "Recognition of States: The collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union," *European Journal of International Law* 4, no.1 (1993): 40.
[18] Weller, *Peace Lost …,* 35.
[19] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 81.
[20] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 37.
[21] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 78.
[22] *Ibid.,* 81.

different reasons. Of the major powers in Europe, France promoted the use of the WEU[23] to place an interposition force on the Balkan, while Britain in a less europhoric stance, opposed the idea, not least because it did not want to get involved in another conflict similar to that of North Ireland.[24] Germany, mostly in unison with France, supported the idea of military pressure, but was not settled enough in its unity and didn't have the domestic will to send its troops to out-of-area operations.[25] One of the main problems of the EC's crisis management in Yugoslavia was the mismatch between its CFSP objectives and the means available to achieve those.[26] The EC was essentially unable to convince the warring parties that non-compliance with agreements and the continuous breach of ceasefires would result in military engagement.[27]

With the conflict intensifying in late 1991 and the role of Europe marginalized, the EC finally decided to seek UN involvement.[28] With the first UN resolutions implemented in September 1991, the EC effectively became the regional agency for the UN. Though the EC was still in charge of the crisis management, it acted on behalf of UN resolutions.[29] The development and achievements of the Vance Plan in November 1991 are therefore credited to the UN, although its effects were supposedly overturned by the too early recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by the EC. This was one of the most

[23] Western European Union (WEU) was a mutual intergovernmental defense organization founded in 1954. Tasks and responsibilities were gradually taken over by CFSP. WEU ceased to exist 30.June 2011.

[24] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 39.

[25] *Ibid*., 39.

[26] Fraser Cameron, *Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union: Past, Present and Future* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 32.

[27] James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 304.

[28] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 75.

[29] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 39.

criticized actions of the EC, because despite its principles of peaceful conflict resolution, it had effectively created new states while dissolving another, older one.[30]

In summary, not all of the EC's crisis management in Slovenia and Croatia was wrong. While the conflict in Slovenia was stopped by the rapid involvement of the EC, its actions in Croatia were ineffective, lacked a clear plan, and contributed very little to the final end of hostilities in 1995. Of all the mistakes, the reluctance to use military power once open hostilities had commenced in order to send a credible message to the opposing forces is certainly the most essential. Its origin is found in the diverse national reservations on the use of troops and the lack of commitment to the Balkans.[31]

With UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 743 in February 1992, the UN authorized the establishment of the UN Protection Force, which consisted mainly of a coalition of European armies,[32] in order to secure four protected areas within Croatia. Although an arms embargo had been put in place before, the warring parties had already prepared for further hostilities.[33]

The conflict in Croatia continued until 1995. In the beginning of 1992 the focus of the international community shifted towards Bosnia, where the conflict between Serbs, Muslims and Croatian continued. As the next section indicates, the growing influence of the UN and the US illustrates how the EC/EU was completely overwhelmed by the complex task.

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[30] Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* …, 250.
[31] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 45.
[32] Cottey, *Security in the 21st* …, 153.
[33] Barbara Ekwall-Uebelhart and Andrei Raevsky, *Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Geneva: UN Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996), 33.

Bosnia – Overwhelmed by Complexity

In April 1992 Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence after a majority vote. The international community recognized its independence, much the same way that they had earlier done with Slovenia and Croatia.[34] Unfortunately, the Bosnian government was not able to exercise its sovereignty because an arms embargo on all parts of the former Yugoslavia effectively prevented the arming of the newly established national security apparatus. After failing in talks with the former central government of SFRY in Belgrade, the Bosnian government was desperate to receive international support to ensure its sovereignty and internal freedom.[35]

With independence, a brutal war began within Bosnia, illustrating the characteristics of the "new wars", where seemingly independent guerilla groups assaulted the civilian population, conducting ethnical cleansing in various areas.[36] With mass murder, mass rape and eviction from supposedly traditionally diverse ethnic regions, the warring factions ensured that further peaceful coexistence was impossible. The EC tried to apply its instruments of power in order to achieve a ceasefire by setting ultimatums and deadlines, each of which was repeatedly unsuccessful. The European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), which had been established within the Brioni Agreement, was expanded to the territory of Bosnia. During the first months of the Bosnian

[34] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 5.
[35] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 44.
[36] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Globalized Era*, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 33.

hostilities, the ECMM even had to be temporarily withdrawn after members were attacked.[37]

In 1992, the EPC members still had not found a consensus on the creation of a WEU mission in Bosnia. Divisions among the major powers within the EC remained unchanged.[38] France increasingly favored the employment of WEU units to support the security of UN installations and diplomats while still exercising moderate diplomatic relations to Serbia, Britain still objected to any military intervention outside of NATO's framework. [39] After extensive discussions among the nine WEU members, a joint NATO/WEU naval mission was established in August 1992 to monitor the UN embargo in the Adriatic Sea, without receiving proper authority to enforce it.[40] This can be linked to the adoption of the Petersburg Tasks by the WEU on June 19th 1992, which widened its operational spectrum.

Realizing that it was finally overwhelmed by the task of managing the crisis in former Yugoslavia in August 1992, the EC and the UN merged closer for further management of the situation. With that, the US as the most influential actor and largest provider of troops and money, joined the setting, having finally concluded its domestic preoccupation with presidential elections. Further action and initiatives were undertaken within the framework of the UN, with UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance and EC representative Lord Owen as the negotiators. Although the overall responsibility of the

[37] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 69.
[38] *Ibid.*, 85.
[39] Lucarelli, "Europe's Response to …," 44.
[40] *Ibid.,* 45.

management had been passed to the UN, the EC remained at the table and contributed constantly to the international efforts.[41]

Overall, the conflict on Bosnia was a kind of "training ground" for the young EU and its CFSP. Institutionalization was not yet effective and the general challenges of the intergovernmental processes of the EU had not been overcome. European ideas of being more than a civilian power, delivering primarily humanitarian assistance, economic sanctions or diplomatic initiatives, were expressed through the CFSP and had created very high expectations in the early 1990, which the EU could not live up to, as the war in Yugoslavia amply demonstrated. [42]

Eventually, the test of the EU's performance occurred in Kosovo, where the war reached its peak four years after the fighting has stopped in Bosnia.

Kosovo – A Lack of Vision

During the first years of hostilities in the former Yugoslavia, it became evident that the international community and especially Europe with its supranational organization of the EC/EU were both surprised and caught off-guard. To a certain degree, based on its young structure, it is understandable that neither effective nor decisive actions were taken to prevent the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. However the fighting in Kosovo started approximately eight years after the EU had its initial experiences in the conflicts in the Balkans. While there was already extensive analysis of the Balkan

[41] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 67.
[42] *Ibid.,* 93.

troubles in the 1990s, especially regarding the failures and inconsistencies of EC/EU's crisis management, the fatal war in Kosovo still developed. The question as to whether or not there had been any institutional learning within the EU can certainly be raised. But before judging failures or successes, the history of the Kosovo conflict needs to be considered.

The reason why the rising tensions in Kosovo had been largely ignored by the international community until 1998 is found in its status as an autonomous province of Serbia. Following the foundation of the SFRY after the Second World War, Kosovo had the status of an autonomous region, without important rights, such as having its own constitution, legislature or representation in the federal Council. Any desire by the majority of the population, the Kosovars, to achieve the status of a republic within the SFRY was denied by Tito and succeeding governments.[43] In 1974, with the ratification of the federal constitution, persistent efforts by the Kosovars led to an upgrade of its status to autonomous province, with nearly the same rights and privileges as the republics within the SFRY.[44]

During the 1980s, Serbs living in Kosovo increasingly complained about anti-Serb prejudice. After Slobodan Milosevic had gained power in 1989, he immediately instituted direct rule over the province and removed all autonomy rights.

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[43] This denial to give up influence in Kosovo has its origin in a strong Serb sentiment about Kosovo, where a major battle between the Serbs and the Ottoman Empire was fought in 1389 (Battle of Kosovo or Battle of Blackbird's Field). As a result, Serbs regard Kosovo as "cradle of their nation" and a symbol of patriotism and nationalism. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kosovo.

[44] Jens Reuter, "Kosovo 1998," *OSCE-Yearbook 1998*, 183-194 (Vienna: 1998), 183. http://core-hamburg.de/documents/yearbook/english/98/OSCE_Yearbook_1998.pdf

Inspired by the international recognition of Croatia and Slovenia the Kosovars intensified their ambitions in 1992, holding a referendum on independence and electing an own unofficial President, Ibrahim Rugova, who advocated non-violent secession from Serbia. At that time, only the US sent specific warnings towards Serbia to not use force against the independence movement.[45] The EU did not perceive Kosovo in the same way as the other republics. As a result, the Badinter Arbitration Commission did not even mention Kosovo in its advice to the EC Peace Conference on Yugoslavia. Based on the previously mentioned federal Constitution of the SFRY from 1974, Kosovo had -*de facto*- the same legal status as one of the republics and should therefore have received the same right to become internationally recognized.[46] Later in 1995, at the US led Dayton Peace talks on Bosnia, the issue on Kosovo's status was again not mentioned and purposely left out to ensure Serbian compliance for the end of the war in Bosnia. There is no doubt that the aims of the Kosovo' Albanians were sacrificed for peace in Bosnia.[47]

As a result, fighting first occurred in February 1996, gradually intensifying until 1998, causing many civilian casualties. Just then, the conflict received attention by the international community. The Balkan Contact Group, consisting of four major European powers (UK, France, Italy and Germany) as well as the US and Russia took the lead in negotiations, demanding a peaceful solution. Although single EU member states were part of the group, the institution of the EU had no say in the management of the crisis.[48]

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[45] James Ker-Lindsay, "From Autonomy to Independence: the Evolution of International Thinking on Kosovo," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* Vol. 11, no.2 (2009): 143. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19448950902920780.

[46] Reuter, "Kosovo 1998," 183.

[47] Ker-Lindsay, "From Autonomy to …, 144.

[48] Juncos, *EU foreign and*…, 67.

In summary, the EU lacked an effective and decisive strategy towards Kosovo. Unlike the rivalries on display during the recognition process of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991/92, this time Member states displayed a unified position on Kosovo, but their position was inconsistent with stated aims to promote human rights and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Once again the EU vehemently tried to set no precedent by getting involved in the internal conflicts within sovereign states. The EU tried to apply its soft power measures of "dialogue" and "confidence building", which resulted in endless delay and procrastination, alternating with verbal threats directed at Belgrade, but with no means to back up such pronouncements.[49]

In the end it was the US taking decisive action using NATO to stop the war with Operation Allied Force. Once again it had been proven that rogue leaders with malicious intentions only understand the language of diplomacy if it is backed with force.[50]

Macedonia – starting to get things right

The last conflict in the series of wars following the Yugoslavian disintegration occurred in Macedonia. Dating back to the formation of the SFRY after WW II, Tito had won Macedonia's loyalty towards the Yugoslavian Federation, by securing Macedonian territory against historical claims of Bulgaria and Serbia in return for the guarantee of Macedonia's status as republic.[51] However, based on its multiethnic society, Macedonia

[49] Reuter, "Kosovo 1998," 194.
[50] Vincent Kronenberger and Jan Wouters, *The European Union and Conflict Prevention – Policy and Legal Aspects* (The Hague: TMC Asser Press, 2004), 297.
[51] Jenny Engstroem, *Democratisation and the Prevention of Violent Conflict* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009), 105.

continuously faced tensions within and with neighboring states, while fearing a spill-over effect from the ongoing conflicts on its borders.

When the break-up of Yugoslavia started, Macedonia held a national referendum on independence on 8 September 1991, resulting with a clear vote in favor of independence.[52] Macedonia then became the only republic which achieved independence directly in the aftermath of the disintegration of the SFRY in 1992. Fortunately, Serbia refrained in this case from the use of force. The Yugoslavian Army withdrew peacefully from Macedonia. The prospect of opening an additional front on the opposite side of the Balkans to Croatia in conjunction with the very small number of Serbs living in Macedonia had ensured Yugoslavian consent.

Although international recognition took until 1995 due to a historical dispute with the EU member Greece,[53] several external institutions supported Macedonia's path towards democratization in the years until the outbreak of hostilities. Macedonia, now being without any military capability, requested support from the UN, which in turn deployed the UN Preventive Force in Macedonia (UNPROFOR, since 1995 UNPREDEP) in 1993.[54] The OSCE as well as multiple NGOs engaged in long-term projects and initiatives to improve interethnic relations.[55] The EU supported Macedonia with its soft power elements, primarily with finances for infrastructure projects, institution-building and humanitarian aid. In March 2000, as part of a Stabilization and

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[52] *Ibid.*, 112.
[53] *Ibid.*, 125.
[54] Engstroem, *Democratisation and the* …, 127.
[55] Ulrich Schneckener, "Developing and Applying EU Crisis Management – Test Case Macedonia," *European Center of Minority Issues (ECMI) Working Paper* No. 14. (Flensburg: 2002), 25. http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/working_paper_14.pdf.

Association Agreement (SAA), Macedonia was offered the prospect of EU integration, regular economic aid, improved trade relations and an advanced political dialogue.[56]

Though external support was provided, interethnic tension continuously increased on a various issues. (1) Albanian members of parliament protested against the definition of the Macedonian state within the preamble of the new constitution; (2) centralization issues, where Albanian dominated regions claimed more autonomy for administrative matters; (3) representation issues within parliament; (4) disputes about official population numbers; (5) language issues at the Albanian University; (6) loyalty issues for the new state and (7) finally a dispute about the distribution of resources.[57] However, all these topics were well known to the international community. Through the 1990s, these problems could be largely concealed through the collective concentration of all ethnicities on outside threats. With the disappearance of those threats and the resolution of the Kosovo crisis and regime change in Serbia, internal conflicts reignited. In early 2001, when the border zone between Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia was increasingly controlled, ethnic Albanian militants, supporting or collaborating with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) initiated deliberate attacks on Macedonian security forces.[58] This triggered EU crisis management structures, led by the HR, Javier Solana, who had the intention of facilitating the framework for negotiations, but neglected to be an active part of it. At the same time, financial and technical assistance activities were increased by

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[56] *Ibid.*, 26.
[57] *Ibid.*, 27-29.
[58] International Crisis Group, "The Macedonian Question: Reform or Rebellion," *Europe Report* No. 109 (Skopje/Brussels: 5 April 2001), 6. http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/Macedonia%209.pdf.

the EU, applying crisis management in combination with long term institution building measures.[59]

A ceasefire did not hold very long. When new hostilities broke out at the end of April 2001, the EU teamed up with NATO. Javier Solana and NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson achieved some success by bringing representatives of all conflict parties to one table with the aim to establish a government of unity and most importantly, prevented the Prime Minister of Macedonia from declaring a "state of war", which would have escalated the situation. [60] During the final phase of the conflict, the EU and US combined their efforts and were therefore able to get the warring parties to sign a Framework Agreement, addressing all disputed topics as mentioned before, including constitutional changes to the benefit of the ethnic Albanians.[61]

Summing up the EU contribution for the resolution of the war in Macedonia, the successes are somewhat outweighed by the failures. First of all, early and clearly visible warning signs were overlooked or ignored. All chances to mitigate the political and interethnic problems, when they were still in the developmental phase, were carelessly wasted. Second, after the very peaceful succession from the Yugoslav Federation, the EU failed in the recognition process of the Republic of Macedonia. Contradicting the recommendations of the Badinter Arbitration Commission, the EU yielded to Greece's veto on Macedonian recognition as an independent state, which delayed the flow of

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[59] Schneckener, "Developing and Applying …," 32.

[60] International Crisis Group, "Macedonian: The Last Chance for Peace," *Europe Report* No. 113 (Skopje/Brussels: 20June 2001), 7. http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/Macedonia%2010.pdf.

[61] Engstroem, *Democratisation and the* …, 132.

external support into Macedonia significantly for some years. As a result and despite the high motivation of all ethnicities, the democratization process could not fully develop.[62]

On the other hand, once the violence broke out, EU crisis management, US represented by the action of the HR, responded very quickly and could contribute an important and decisive role.[63] A major difference in comparison to the early years of the Yugoslav imbroglio was also that all member states acted jointly towards a common goal.

Although the EU applied all short, medium and long-term measures to build trust and stability, the unifying effort to put pressure on the warring parties has to be seen as essential to a rapid and enduring positive outcome. The parallel roles and importance of the other actors, namely the OSCE, NATO and the US needs to be mentioned explicitly.

Conclusion

> *"The European Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and the readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crisis…"*
>
> Declaration of St. Malo[64]

The EC had emerged from the Cold War very ambitious and their leaders showed great dedication to unite Europe politically and ideologically in order to become one of the big entities with political weight and influence on the globe. Unfortunately, the conflict in the Balkans came a few years too early.[65]

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[62] Engstroem, *Democratisation and the* …, 158.
[63] Kronenberger, *The European Union and* …, 297.
[64] St Malo Declaration 1998: Franco-British Summit: Joint Declaration on European Defense, 4 December 1998. St Malo: Heads of State and Government of France and the United Kingdom.
[65] Schneckener, "Developing and Applying …," 9.

The EC/EU was pushed into a position to take charge of a severe developing crisis at a time where the instruments to handle the complex problem set were neither fully established nor operational.[66] First the EC/EU experienced embarrassment when it was not capable of stopping the conflict in Croatia in 1991 and the UN had to be involved. The continuous reduction of influence in the search for a solution in Bosnia, based on the necessary involvement of the US, bringing coercive diplomacy backed by military force to the table, were understood by the EU, that it required means for autonomous action of its own in order to put leverage on the good ideas for conflict management. Based on its economic foundation, the EC/EU had a viable set of soft power tools at its disposal with which pressure on warring parties could be put. Through the lack of understanding for the roots of the conflicts, a faulty interpretation and a lack of foresight, these tools were insufficient to stop or prevent further fighting. Though some EU member states proposed the use of force, the intergovernmental structure of the CSFP led to delays in finding consensus among the members, which resulted in loss of credibility and eventually of the responsibility to lead the management of the crisis.

Considering that the EC's principle objectives in the beginning of the 1990s had been the promotion of peace, prevention of unilateral involvement of member states and satisfying the domestic public opinion, the hesitant management of the conflict becomes understandable.

All in all, it can be concluded, that neither the individual member states nor the EU with its institutions had anticipated the full scale of the existing potential for conflict

[66] Knud Erik Jorgensen, *European Approaches to Crisis Management* (Aarhus: Kluver Law International, 1997), 3.

in the Balkans in the right way. While this might be a weak excuse for the lack of decisive action in the beginning of the conflict in Croatia and even Bosnia, this certainly cannot be valid for Kosovo or Macedonia.

Reflecting the ten years of conflict covered in this essay, a progressive development of the CFSP becomes obvious. Beginning with the Treaty of Amsterdam, the definition of the European Headline Goal and the start of the CSDP in 1999 the will of the EU Member states materializes to add more coercive means to its portfolio of crisis management tools. Providing the CFSP with institutional power to react to an emerging conflict is essential for the EU in order to manage future conflict prevention tasks.

Despite the criticism about the failures and the general reluctance to act in the Balkans, the EU has finally learned its lesson, set the foundation and has started a promising path to become a relevant crisis manager and crisis preventer in the 21st century.

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