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Successful and Unsuccessful Conflict Prevention in Practice: Albania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia in the 1990s

A UN Peacekeeper in Sarajevo, Mikhail Evstafiev, via Wikimedia Commons

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Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed several conflicts such as in Somalia, Rwanda, the Gulf Wars and Yugoslavia. As a consequence, the international community had to face the issue of formulating a meaningful way to manage such hostilities and possibly to prevent them, which was becoming ever more urgent. This paper aims to

analyse the implementation of conflict prevention in the post-Cold War era and its resulting outcomes, guided by the question: why are some conflicts successfully prevented, while others break out? More specifically, why have some hostilities been contained while at the same time the Yugoslav conflict broke out so violently? The war in Yugoslavia has arguably been one of the most violent instances of post-WWII conflict, with roughly 140.000 casualties and almost 4 million refugees (Transitional Justice in the Former Yugoslavia). This paper demonstrates how the indicators that the hostilities were about to break out were clear and the conflict could have therefore been prevented. However, conflict prevention operations were only launched when it was too late. This begs the question as to why international actors failed to realise the degree to which the situation was worsening in the Balkans. These questions should be answered to formulate a more effective conflict-predictive set of mechanisms that will allow for a timely intervention in future cases. It is important to learn from the mistakes committed in the case of the Yugoslav war, in order to prevent such a violent conflict from breaking out again.

This thesis investigates whether there are some constant features in the operationalisation of conflict prevention that determine its success or failure and to which extent they affect the outcome. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to analyse the factors that allowed an efficient conflict prevention operation to take place both in Macedonia and Albania. Consequently, this paper will investigate whether these elements are also present, to what extent and what role they played in the case of Yugoslavia.

Literature Review

Preventive Action

The central focus of this paper is preventive action, which includes conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy, although Moolakkattu claims 'preventive diplomacy' to be the most commonly used (3). There seem to be some disagreements as to what preventive action entails (see Ackermann 341), but its fundamental feature is that it is focused on "*when* it comes into play during a conflict, not *how* it is done" (Lund 288). Therefore, timing is a key point in conflict prevention operations. Precisely, in order to make a preventive action mission successful, it needs to be deployed before the breakout of violence, as it would lose its purpose otherwise. According to Lund, conflict prevention is applicable in a somewhat peaceful

situation, where the possibility of consistent physical violence seems likely to take place but it has not broken out yet (288).

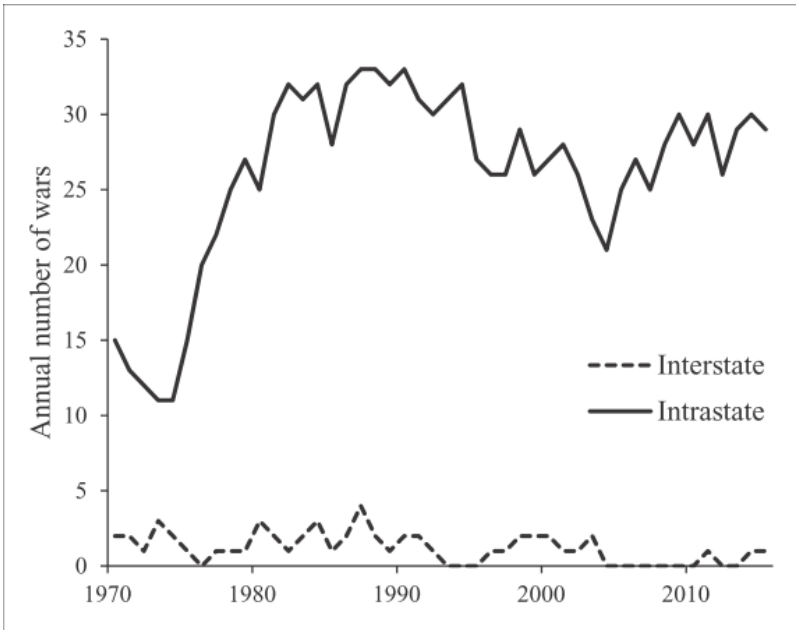
Preventive action is further divided into two diametrically opposite sub-categories: operational and structural prevention. Ackermann defines operational prevention as the missions focused on dealing with imminent crises when the prevention of violence has become unavoidable (341). It is deployed in extremely urgent cases, and due to this, it is often expected to have rather limited productive results besides avoiding the use of violence. On the other hand, structural prevention (also referred to as peacekeeping) is more focused on addressing the factors that might create the conditions for conflict reoccurrence, and consequently usually more efficient. This can be implemented in several ways, and for instance Ackermann explains that it can be blended in to aid and development programs, increasing its positive long-term effects (342). It is important to highlight the fact that these two sub-categories seem to be sequential: in order to have structural prevention, it is necessary to implement operational prevention first. It is not possible to reach a meaningful and long-lasting peace without putting a halt to open warfare first.

History

Historically, conflict prevention has been the focus of theoretical debate throughout the years. It is important to point out that this is not a new nor a revolutionary concept. There are different opinions as to how far back conflict prevention stretches: for instance, Ackermann claims that it is at least a couple of centuries old, dating back to the Congress of Vienna in 1815 (340). Other scholars see the birth of the League of Nations as arguably the first institution for international diplomacy, aimed at preventing the reoccurrence of a World War (Pedersen 5). This is of considerable relevance as the international community was already somewhat familiar with the concept of conflict prevention when dealing with the Yugoslav war; despite this, preventive action failed to be implemented appropriately in this specific instance.

Additionally, during the Cold War, the concept and practice of 'preventive diplomacy' were drafted by the former UN Security General Dag Hammarskjold, referring to the policy of thwarting proxy wars in the Third World from escalating globally (Lund 288). The end of the Cold War brought about a radical change in the balances of international politics. Amstutz individuates a correlation between the fall of the USSR and the increase in conflicts throughout the world. He argues that the dissolution of the bipolar system and balances of power that characterised the Cold War came to an end, these changes were the catalyst that went on to

spark “ethnic, religious and tribal conflicts within fragile states” (128). Thus, partially due to the end of the Cold War, several conflicts broke out in the early years after decades of ideological bipolarity that characterised the Cold War (Somalia, Yugoslavia and Rwanda, amongst the most relevant ones). The following table demonstrates how in the years after the fall of the USSR a remarkable spark in intrastate conflict took place. Consequently, it shows that the concept and practice of conflict prevention was not a revolutionary concept when the international community had to face the violent break-up of Yugoslavia.



(Sandler 1878)

The Determining Factors for Conflict Prevention

There are many factors that might determine the outcome of a conflict prevention operation. This thesis focuses on some of the most important elements for an in-depth analysis: mutual coordination, political will, and the legitimacy of intervention, which are argued to play a fundamental role in the outcome of preventive action operation (see Ackermann, George and Holl, Lund). However, before delving into these factors it is also important to highlight that there are additional factors that contribute to degenerate a somewhat peaceful situation into a conflictual one, such as the economic and political stability of a country. This paper demonstrates that these elements also played an important role in the three case studies analysed. Indeed, the absence of economic and political stability seems to have contributed to the creation of tensions, which in some cases degenerated into open conflict.

First, mutual coordination refers to the ability of the preventive actions operation to achieve a good degree of internal cohesion between its different components. It is important to point out that putting preventive action into practice is a complicated operation: it requires the achievement of a commonality of intents within the parties involved in the mission and the adoption of an approach that fits the conflict at hand properly. Furthermore, successful conflict prevention implementation needs to be specific and strategically coordinated (Ackermann 343); however, these requirements are not always met. For instance, Huan and Emmers illustrate the importance of good coordination and solid command structures for the successful preventive action operation in East Timor in 1999. Indeed, Australia – backed by other states such as Thailand, South Korea and New Zealand among other states – was in charge of the mission and installed an efficient chain of command that connected the operatives on the ground with the UN headquarters in New York (82).

Second, political will refers to the determination that a given country shows while implementing a conflict prevention operation. It has been argued that one of the primary reasons for conflict prevention failure is the lack of political will from the preventing actors' side. George and Holl explain that although a given crisis is taken seriously, a lack of action might still happen due to the fact that governments or politicians have difficulties in convincing their electorate to support the prevention of a conflict before it escalates into open warfare (10). Politicians need first to make sure to maintain the political support from their voters, who might not be too inclined to spend money and sacrifice lives on a faraway conflict that they do not perceive as a direct threat to their national security. Lack of political will could result in a half-hearted preventive action with limited effect or it could even worsen the situation.

This could result in the given country intervening half-heartedly in a preventive action mission, not achieving the expected result or worsening the situation. Lund expands on this point introducing the notion of "*excess* of political wills": by that he refers to the fact that several organisations and humanitarian activities are already present in conflict-prone areas, creating a general dispersion of resources, as well as widespread disorganisation (296). The complications that might derive from the 'excess of political will' are strictly interlinked with the belief that a conflict prevention operation must be carefully organised, especially keeping into account that inappropriate preventive action attempts might cause more damage than complete inaction (Lund 297). Additionally, nations might be more inclined to intervene (or not) in countries where they are stakeholders. For instance, in the case of East Timor, it is rather logical that regional hegemons such as Australia, New Zealand and South Korea (among

others) were more directly involved in the operation. Countries with looser ties to the region or the specific area where there is a developing crisis have less incentives to deploy any type of mission. Consequently, contrasting political wills, or the lack of a consistent approach to such situations can hinder the effectiveness of preventive action.

Third, legitimacy of intervention refers to the legal authorisation by the ruling authorities to enter the country. Under the United Nations Charter, countries are not allowed to intervene in other sovereign states' domestic politics (1.4). The only exception to this norm is when there happens to be a clear threat to peace and security, and the UN will thus resort to different methods to restore peace and security (Chapter VII art. 39). Although this article legitimises a foreign intervention from an international law standpoint, local authorities may still consider the intervention to be illegitimate, which could compromise the outcome of the mission. The issue of legitimacy of intervention is a central one, as it can either simplify the deployment of an operation – and thus increase its chances of success – or it can obstruct its implementation, therefore hindering the probability of a favourable outcome.

Moreover, the nature of the conflict is a crucial additional element to keep into account. Indeed, some wars present blurred lines between the factions fighting and their motives, which can complicate its recognition and the formulation of an appropriate response. Furthermore, every case of escalating conflict might present unique features: the socio-political, economic or cultural drivers that might ignite a conflict in one situation might be completely harmless in another, or vice versa. Fortna believes that ethnic divisions in a state increase the likelihood of a civil war, and that peace is considerably harder to preserve in situations where identity conflicts take place (273). This has been the case in several post-Cold War conflicts, such as in Somalia, where ethnicity has been used as *casus belli* for igniting the hostilities (see Harper). Precisely, some types of wars have proved to be more difficult to deal with than others, and thus the successful implementation of preventive action is increasingly more complicated.

Research Design

The paper's following section applies the theoretical framework on preventive action to events that took place in contemporary history. This thesis intends to assess the factors that allowed a preventive action operation to take place and to be successful. This paper takes into consideration both a case of failed conflict prevention as well as two successful examples, in order to assess whether and to what extent these factors are present in both cases. Hence, this thesis aims to investigate three recent case studies regarding preventive action. In terms of the successful cases, the focus will be firstly on the Italian-Greek-led (and UN-backed) operation in the Albanian crisis of 1997, also known as 'Operation Alba' and secondly on the UN preventive mission in Macedonia in 1993 (UNPREDEP). These two instances are particularly

important, as a result of their successful outcome, they have exemplified what guidelines are to be followed for future conflict prevention missions. The third case that will be analysed is that of the failed preventive action missions during the violent civil war that determined the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Methodically-speaking, the designated dependent variable of this paper is the outcome of a conflict prevention operation. This will be assessed through a set of independent variables, which are the factors determining the success or failure of a preventive action mission, namely (1) mutual coordination, (2) political will and (3) legitimacy of intervention.

This thesis first delves into an analysis of the structural socio-political and economic situation in which both countries found themselves in the lead-up to the crisis, as well as examine whether and to which extent the rival explanations provided in the literature review are applicable to the specific case studies. Subsequently, the factors that created the grounds for a successful conflict prevention mission in Albania and Macedonia are applied to the former Yugoslav Republic. Thus, the focus of the investigation lies in unveiling whether the socio-political and economic conditions are somewhat comparable between these three cases, in order to understand why the first two prevention operations were effective, whilst the latter was not. Next, the analysis will focus on whether the elements for a successful preventive action are present in the Yugoslav case, to which extent, and possibly attempt to formulate a plausible explanation for their presence or lack thereof. This paper will combine a between case analysis, in order to assess the importance that certain factors play in certain instances of conflict prevention implementation.

The cases in question – Albania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia – present several similarities with each other, including geographical proximity, shared historical and cultural traits, and comparable political events in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, as this paper will demonstrate, they also do present some differences, exemplified by the three determining factors for successful conflict prevention that are analysed further on. Consequently, this thesis makes use of a process tracing approach: as James Mahoney explains, process tracing is often used when analysing the causes of events that have already taken place, focusing on events at different points throughout time and how they contribute to a given outcome (202). Additionally, this thesis deals with only a limited number of the cases examined: thus, a structured focused comparison is central to the analysis in question, in order to avoid drawing conclusions based on a limited number of historical analogies when dealing with these case studies (George and Bennett 67). This seems to be a suitable framework to adopt to the

circumstance of the Balkans in the 1990s, as this paper aims to explain why the Albanian and Macedonian crises were successfully prevented, as opposed to the the Yugoslav conflict.

Thus, based on the gathered theoretical insight, it is possible to draft some tentative predictions regarding the outcome of this paper's research question. On the one hand, in the cases of successful conflict prevention, it is expectable to witness the presence of the determining factors for conflict prevention. On the other hand, in the case of unsuccessful conflict prevention, it seems likely that these factors were not present or did not have a sufficient influence to determine the outcome of the operations. Consequently, the operations in Albania and Macedonia are supposed to be characterised by mutual coordination, political will and legitimacy, while Yugoslavia to a lesser extent.

This thesis makes use of a different array of sources: primary sources such as official United Nations resolutions and CIA reports will be analysed to assess the reactions of the international community to these events. Additionally, it is important to point out that all of the case studies selected are in an extremely constrained geographical area, as well as time period, which will make the findings of this study applicable only to the Balkan region.

Albania

The first of the three case studies that this thesis takes into consideration is the prevention of a potential civil war in Albania in the late 1990s. The situation in the country constantly worsened throughout the last decade of the 20th century and was about to hit rock bottom by March 1997. Indeed, by that point Albania was on the brink of becoming 'another' failed state, as the central government could not reassert control over a country ravaged by guerrillas in an anarchic state. However, by August of the same year, Albania was holding new elections, which were deemed to be fair by the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the future seemed overall considerably brighter (Miall 74). This

chapter demonstrates that the mission deployed in Albania, 'Operation Alba', created the grounds for the improvement of the conditions in the region. The mission aimed at avoiding the escalation of hostilities, providing humanitarian aid to civilians, and organising a fair new round of elections, and it ultimately allowed the country to overcome the risk of a civil war. This chapter investigates the factors that changed the sorts of a nation so radically, and the reasons why such transition took place in a somewhat peaceful way. Albania and Operation Alba are exemplary cases of successful conflict prevention, and it is thus necessary to assess what factors determined its accomplishment.

Setting the stage for intervention

Albania lived throughout the entire Cold War in a situation of nearly total self-isolation from the rest of the world; during the rule of the communist leader Enver Hoxha from 1944 to 1985, the country held few if any political and economic relationships with the West. Consequently, once the Cold War ended, Albania, as many of the other former pro-Soviet countries, had to reconsider its position in world politics after the political and ideological 'defeat' of the communist experiment. Thus, the period between the late 1980s and early 1990s saw Albania undertaking a process of opening up to the West for economic and political purposes, in correlation to the fall of the USSR as well as the death of Hoxha in 1985 (Codispoti 82). However, the isolationist years of the Cold War had taken their toll. Kostakos and Bourantonis explain that the legacy of isolation, repression and economic underdevelopment that Albania carried with itself was a considerably heavy one (50). Additionally, Miall believes that Albania experienced "the harshest and most protracted" of all the Stalinist regimes, and that its transition from such a regime to a more capitalist leaning economy was the most sudden in Europe (75). The country switched extremely quickly from Hoxha's repressive and isolationist regime to a much more liberal one in the span of roughly seven years.[1] In 1992, the Albanian Democratic Party directed by Sali Berisha won the elections with an important margin, which led many to think that the process of democratisation in Albania was underway. However, as a result of decades of isolationism during the Cold War, the financial situation that Berisha found once he got into office was dramatic to say the least. Unemployment rates had skyrocketed to 50% of the total workforce, while inflation rate reached above 200% and "the average per capita income was the lowest in Eastern Europe" (Tripodi 91). Consequently, before Albania could undertake the long-desired democratisation process, there first were some

[1] This period took place between 1985 and 1992, between Enver Hoxha's death and Sali Berisha's elections, which roughly coincides with Albania opening up to the West.

much more urgent issues to address first, which put some considerable pressure on the government.

Due to the harsh economic situation that Berisha had to confront himself with, in correlation to the lack of visible improvements, he started losing popularity in favour of the Socialist Party between 1993 and 1994. Consequently, he began countering any type of political opposition as a socialist one, adopting more and more authoritarian stratagems to suppress any dissent (Miall 77), such as the establishment of a new secret police. This was quite similar to the methods used by authoritarian leaders during the Cold War, and thus it was not particularly welcomed by the Albanians (Tripodi 93). Furthermore, although Albania was heavily reliant on foreign aid and on the international community, in this period Berisha managed to create a conflictual relationship with his backers beyond borders, as he adopted an increasing anti-democratic behaviour in regards to domestic policy. Tripodi explains that as a consequence of the Albanian leader refusing to give in on constitutional reforms-related issues and to take a more democratic approach, the then United States President Bill Clinton put a halt to a foreign aid package for some $3 million, delivering a considerable blow to Albanian economy (92).

Berisha therefore, in his constant struggle to construct another political identity in a post-Cold War era, eventually ended up falling back into a very much Socialist perspective, suppressing internal oppositions and isolating himself from the international community. The situation took an additional turn for the worse in 1996, as the elections approached and Berisha aimed to run for president again. In this instance, the OSCE reported that the elections had taken place in an illegal fashion; This was the breaking point of the relations with the international community, as the United States requested that Berisha announced another round of elections, to which he refused (Tripodi 93).

What finally precipitated Albania into chaos and anarchy was the failure of the so-called financial ‘pyramid scheme’ in 1997. Tripodi illustrates that this system had been proposing investors some very high-interest rates and they were assured that their capital would double within the year (94); naturally, this scheme was unsustainable in the long run, and it collapsed after a few years. Additionally, although both the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank had warned the authorities that these banks were playing a dangerous game, the Albanian government was profiting politically from this spectacular – though hollow – economic growth, and thus resorted to inaction (Miall 80). This quick money-making machine

had brought many Albanians to believe that they could reach a lifestyle comparable to that of their Western neighbours even after over half a century of complete economic isolation (Tripodi 94). As a result, when the pyramid system failed in early 1997 and left numerous people on the brink of bankruptcy, the disappointment was extremely widespread throughout the country and quickly took a violent turn. Several riots broke out throughout the entire nation, and rebels started seizing control of many areas of the Southern region (Greco 204), where they also managed to get in possession of several armaments supplies; the situation worsened even further as gangs and local mafia bosses took advantage of the situation to increase their degree of control over certain areas (Kostakos and Bourantonis 51).

There was a high chance of a civil war in the country at this stage, with the complete collapse of a working state structure due to the crisis (Ignazi et al 115). As the circumstances had derailed out of control, the Albanian authorities declared the state of emergency on March the 2nd and resorted to deploying the army against the rebellious groups. However, the military troops were rather swift in deserting after a few clashes in the South, leaving Berisha concretely on his own (Tripodi 94). Only a few days later, the president was forced to admit that he could no longer contain nor control the uprisings, and on March the 12th the rebels took control of the capital Tirana and the airport. After this final blow to Berisha's side, he was forced to call for armed intervention from the West (Miall 81).

The intervention

The international community had been keeping an eye on the developments of the Albanian crisis, and thus had a good overview of the issues in the country at that point in time. Additionally, Italy had already been active in humanitarian operations in Albania: 'Operation Pelican' took place between 1991 and 1993, when over 5.000 unarmed Italian military staff had been distributing food and basic necessities to the Albanian population (Tripodi 92). It is important to point out that Operation Pelican was deployed in a situation where Albania's infrastructures were still strong enough, and thus the mission penetrated in the country to a relatively small degree. Although the situation was worsening quickly, the international community had reached a stalemate point regarding how to react to the crisis. The United States and Germany advocated for a regime change and Berisha's resignation, while Italy was more inclined to have a gradual leadership change process (Greco 204). Because of their territorial proximity, Greece and Italy were strongly committed to preventing the country from descending into civil war. Additionally, they had "well-founded fears" that many Albanian refugees would soon knock at their doors for political asylum (Kostakos and Bourantonis 54).

Therefore, although the European Union opposed military involvement in Albania, the two nations – backed by France – decided to act alone, providing humanitarian assistance (Tripodi 97). Eventually, in late March 1997, the United Nations Security Council determined that the crisis in Albania was a "threat to peace and security in the region",[2] as it is formulated in Chapter VII of the Charter, and thus promoted the peacekeeping operation to provide humanitarian assistance through the Security Council 1101(Dino Kritsiotis 520-521).[3] Ignazi et al. believe this to be a revolutionary moment for several reasons, as the UN had never given a mandate to a country with so many "geographical, historical and economic ties" to the region (108). Within a few weeks the deployment of all the nations contributing to the operation was complete, adding up to roughly 6.500 troops. [4] Tripodi explains that the Italian experience in peacekeeping operation contributed to creating an efficient and coordinated chain of command, establishing a "steering committee" based in Rome that included members from all the states participating to the mission. Additionally, although the directives were decided at a multinational level, the troops on the ground were receiving orders through the national ranks and were placed under the leadership of General Forlani (99). This organisational structure was highly beneficial to the coordination of the troops on the ground, and it also created a consensus on the general directions of the operation at a supervisory level.

Operation Alba was successful from the very first days of its deployment, distributing 470 tons of food supplies to civilians and social institutions (Kiritiotis 523). Although the primary goal of the mission was plainly humanitarian, the deployment had a positive impact on the semi-anarchic situation in the region, as it helped to stop the security emergency (Tripodi 98). The Italian troops in particular also carried out operations of international organisations protection and thwarting criminal gangs' activities, which were extremely widespread in the country (Ignazi et al. 112). Additionally, as the mandate was initially for only three months, the UN extended it by an extra 45 days with the Security Council Resolution 1114 of June 1997, so that the troops could be on the ground during the so-longed elections that the international community had been requesting (Kostakos and Bourantonis 53). The mission provided monitors for the elections as well as technical assistance, concretely making the

[2] Ignazi et al. explain that the main threat to the peace and security in the region, a part from conflict and its potential spillover, was the waves of refugees about to land on Italian shores and then move to other countries, which could have had destabilised the region (115).
[3] The involvement of the UN remained partial and mostly limited to humanitarian aid through the World Food Programme (WFP) (Kostakos and Bourantonis 51).
[4] The countries participating included Italy, France, Greece, Turkey, Spain, Denmark, Romania, Austria, Belgium, Slovenia and Portugal (Tripodi 98).

holding of elections possible, which unsurprisingly resulted in Berisha's defeat and resignation (Miall 82). Although it would not seem like something extraordinary, the fact that the country was able to hold new elections in such a relatively short period of time went beyond the expectations, as it required a sufficiently stable political environment for the Albanians to have free and fair elections.

Fatir Mema believes that this achievement is mostly to be credited to Operation Alba, as it managed to create a psychological situation for state (re)building and for elections, reassuring the civilians that "Europe cared about Albania" (60). During these elections, several observers of the OSCE were present in the country, in order to prevent the reoccurrence of a manipulated vote. After the outcome of the elections, the OSCE published an official report regarding the conduct of the voting, which was declared to be overall free and fair, mostly as a result of three indicators. Firstly, there was a considerable turnout of voters to the stations (roughly 73%), secondly, citizens could cast their ballots without being intimidated and thirdly, the electoral commissions were found to have behaved in a "correct and impartial" way (*Albania Parliamentary Elections June 29, 1997* 4-5). Consequently, it is possible to witness how the political situation changed within a year: in 1996 the elections had taken place in a dishonest way according to the OSCE, while a year later the same organisation determined that the voting procedures were appropriate.

Assessing the intervention

Operation Alba was successful for several reasons and managed to halt Albania from proceeding down a path that would have potentially led the country into a civil war. Firstly, the organisation of the operation and its coordination were central factors to its success. As Tripodi illustrated, the smoothly-running steering committee based in Rome and composed by all member states contributing to the mission allowed for the establishment of an efficient chain of command on the ground. The operation's purpose was explicitly announced before it was deployed on the ground – that is, to provide humanitarian aid, to create the political stability for new elections and indirectly to prevent the outbreak of a civil war. It is important to mention that the timing was an especially important variable, as the mission was deployed at the point where Albania was on the brink of a civil war (Tripodi 102): in several instances, timely action has been deemed to be one of the most important variables determining the outcome of preventive action deployment. Furthermore, Ignazi et al. believe this mission to be somewhat of a turning point in preventive action operations as Europe wanted to redeem itself from the

failed prevention in Yugoslavia and wanted to show the international community its ability in conflict resolution (108).

Second, an additional factor that allowed the operation to be successful was the political will of the intervening countries. Italy and Greece especially were determined to avoid the outbreak of a conflict in Albania from the very first days of the crisis. This meant that both countries – later on backed by the UN and some of its member states – were able to intervene rather swiftly and in a meaningful way. As explained by theorists, this is a crucial point for a successful operation, as if states intervene half-heartedly, they might cause more harm than anything. However, it is also worth noting that both Italy and Greece were 'stakeholder' countries in relation to the Albanian crisis: due to geographical proximity and economic ties, both countries were determined to prevent a conflict from breaking out, as it would have affected them as well. Indeed, at the time of the deployment both countries had already been affected by the crisis in Albania, as many migrants were seeking asylum in Italy and Greece. Therefore, if the conflict had broken out on a bigger scale, it would have affected both countries even more.

Third, another fundamental aspect was the legitimacy of intervention. Indeed, President Berisha – willingly or not – requested the intervention of the international community to stabilise a situation that he could no longer manage and that was getting out of control. This formal appeal by Berisha legitimised Operation Alba to take place and to enter Albanian soil without violating its sovereignty. Although one could argue that in this instance the Chapter VII of the UN Charter could have been activated, as the situation in Albania was a threat to regional peace and security, this does not mean that the government would have accepted an intervention. If the intervention had taken place without the consent and legitimisation of the Albanian authorities, the situation could have deteriorated even further, as the peacekeeping troops would have had to deal with uncooperating officials who did not deem the presence of an international mission on their soil to be legitimate. Consequently, the fact that Berisha figuratively opened the doors to the international community seems to have been a crucial factor in creating the grounds for a successful conflict prevention operation in Albania.

Moreover, the nature of the prevented conflict was important as well: the grievances were caused by the inefficient management of the state by the hand of Berisha, both politically as well as economically. Therefore, the international community did not have to face an identity conflict, which as aforementioned is usually more complicated to address. The situation in

Albania saw only two factions facing each other (governmental forces and insurgents) and the main reasons that created tensions were chiefly political and economic. The Albanian conflict was overall rather straightforward to address in comparison to other cases. Consequently, the type of conflict has proved to be an indirectly important variable for the outcome of preventive action missions.

Operation Alba has thus proved to be one of the most effectively formulated and operated preventive action missions for the aforementioned reasons: the typology of the mission could be categorised as structural prevention, as the deployment took place before the violence broke out into open warfare and was chiefly focused on creating the grounds for a long-lasting peace. Together with the UN preventive deployment in Macedonia that will be analysed in the coming chapters, Operation Alba has become one of the milestones in preventive action due to its successful outcome, therefore gaining relevance in international politics and noteworthy for this thesis.

Macedonia

The second case study this thesis analyses is that of the successful conflict prevention that took place in Macedonia, as a consequence of the ongoing hostilities in Yugoslavia throughout the early 1990s. This chapter demonstrates how the country was on the brink of civil war that was ravaging the neighbouring Yugoslavia but managed to avoid a descent into violence successfully. Due to the efforts of the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov, as well as to his wise policies, the country managed to detach itself from the Yugoslav Republic in the first place, and from the open conflict that took place in the following years. Furthermore, the international community's intervention proved to be performed with accurate timing,

cooperation and purpose, allowing the country to stop the war in Yugoslavia from spilling over into its borders and to effectively support the creation of a state-building process. Therefore, Macedonia proved to be another instance of successful conflict prevention, and thus it is worth investigating which factors characterised the UN preventive action missions – UNPROFOR and UNPREDEP – to be overall successful. [5] The case of Macedonian intervention is arguably even more crucial to conflict prevention, as scholars such as Bjorkdahl believe that this instance is the "first and only substantive preventive mission by the UN" (54). Although one could argue that the operation of Albania partially involved the UN as well, the Macedonian case is undoubtedly one of the first preventive action operations, and thus it is even more crucial to analyse its characteristics thoroughly.

Setting the stage for intervention

As the civil war in the former Yugoslav Republic was mounting, Macedonia was concerned about the chance of violence spillover from Yugoslavia into its borders. Ackermann explains that Macedonian president Kiro Gligorov – accompanied by Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic – had repeatedly tried to deflate the tensions between the regions by trying to transform Yugoslavia into a union of republics (410). However, such a loosely organised and semi-federal system was not in the plans of Serbian leader Milosevic, who aimed at seizing territories of Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Croatia (Ramet 358). In light of the unfeasibility of reaching a compromise on the redesigned nature and future of the Yugoslav Republic, the Macedonian government declared independence from Yugoslavia and announced the creation of the FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) on 17 September 1991, as the conflict in Yugoslavia was about to break out (Ackermann 410).

The declaration of independence was not taken particularly well by Serbia, with whom Macedonia had a history of continuous difficult relationships. On the other hand, Eldridge believes that Milosevic was not particularly interested in the sorts of Macedonia, and thus decided to allow its independence on the grounds that he considered it to be an economic liability due to the country's complicated financial situation (52). However, Gligorov was well aware of the fact that its independence was bound to increase the tensions, and that Serbian forces might invade Macedonia in order to seize control of the country. What put additional strain on the situation was that the country was de facto incapable of defending itself from a potential attack, as Gligorov had negotiated the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from

[5] Bjorkdahl explains that the first mission to be deployed was UNPROFOR, which was then replaced with UN Security Council Resolution 983 by UNPREDEP in 1995 (61).

Macedonian territory in exchange for the elimination of all armaments and defences they possessed, leaving them thus at the mercy of the events (Ackermann 412). On the other hand, Stefanova believes this to be an astute political move, as it might have deprived Macedonia of its defences, but on the other hand it removed the country as a potential military target for Serbian aggression (111).[6] Another factor that created quite some concerns in the country was Serbia and Milosevic's hostile intentions; Milosevic was aware of the military powerlessness of Macedonia, and therefore started displaying an assertive behaviour towards the country. In 1993 for instance, he was once allegedly quoted telling the Greek foreign minister that soon there might not be much left of Macedonia to recognise (Ackermann 412). This sort of instances exemplifies the mounting pressure that Macedonia and its president were under, having to face a hostile neighbouring nation, a conflict that might break out within Macedonian borders, and the lack of any defences in the case of an attack.

In addition, Macedonia had been facing some internal issues ever since its independence. Ackermann explains that there were at least two additional potential causes for conflict besides the external threat that Serbia posed. Firstly, Macedonia was the poorest republic of the former Yugoslavia, afflicted by high unemployment rates and had to face the challenges posed by restructuring a Communist economic system (Julie Kim 3). Secondly, as in several Balkan states, the country presented an ethnically mixed population. In the specific case, the country was characterised by the presence of a substantial Albanian minority, which created tensions with the majoritarian ethnicity of Slav Macedonians. The most crucial cause of apprehension was that the Albanian minority did not consider itself as such on the grounds that they believed to constitute 30-40% of the country's citizens. Therefore, they strived to obtain the title of constituting ethnicity rather than that of a minority. Although it seems that the official percentages of Albanians living in Macedonia added up only to roughly 23% instead, the issue was still a concrete one, as they claimed they deserved more recognition on matters of language rights, education and discriminatory practices (Ackermann 411). An additional source of tensions was a protracted series of constitutional issues with Greece, such as the use of the name 'Macedonia' (which resulted in the creation of the FYROM instead, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (Ackermann 413).[7] Therefore, the Macedonian

[6] There still seems to be some controversy on this issue, as Ackermann believes that it was the Yugoslav Army who removed the military equipment (4).

[7] As a proof of the protracted controversies regarding the official name of Macedonia, the two countries reached an agreement only as of 17 June 2018, renaming the FYROM to "Republic of North Macedonia" (Tagaris).

government had to deal with several issues that were affecting the country's stability and were posing a threat to its integrity. Gligorov had a rather limited array of options to face the imminent crisis that was looming over the newly-established Macedonian state. Consequently, he decided to directly request the intervention of the international community in order to protect Macedonia's borders from a spillover of violence as well as from a potential invasion by Milosevic's forces.

The intervention

In response to Gligorov's official aid request, the UN passed the Resolution 795 in December 1992, authorising the establishment of a UN Protection Force and requesting the Secretary-General to deploy the required troops immediately (UN Resolution 795, 37). Although the first forces on the ground consisted of a contingent of 500 Canadian troops deployed as early as January 1993, these retired with the arrival of the so-called NordBatt. This was the leading unit of the operation: a joint cooperative battalion constituted by Nordic countries, which included Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The deployment of the NordBatt was exceptionally fast, as the troops arrived in Skopje around mid-February 1993 and were operational by the 19th of the same month, only three months after the passing of the Resolution 795 (Bjorkdahl 61). The main task of the mission was to patrol and establish the borders between Macedonia and Yugoslavia, in order to prevent a violence spillover or a Serbian invasion. As explained in the UN's UNPROFOR Summary, the assignment consisted in "monitoring and reporting" developments on the border which could have threatened the stability in Macedonia (1). Ackermann explains that UN troops were patrolling some 500 km of the frontier, controlling border crossing and incursions by Serbian soldiers: these were rather frequent due to the lack of a fixed demarcation of the borders between the two states as well as a provocative tactic by the Serbian army (6). Additionally, Stamnes explains that the UNPREDEP/UNPROFOR also carried out another number of tasks, ranging from monitoring 1994 elections, aid and assistance to civilians, and projects dealing with social welfare, constituting a three-headed approach to Macedonia, based on military, political and socio-economic issues (168).

A factor that shows the efficiency and the necessity of this mission is the fact that being launched in 1993, it has been renewed every six months constantly up until 1999. This is a demonstration that both the international community and the Macedonian authorities deemed the UNPREDEP's presence to be a fundamental player in the country's stability. Furthermore, in the years that the mission has been present and deployed on the ground, the results have been

concretely recognisable: precisely, Stefanova believes that there is a causal relationship between the presence of UNPREDEP and the "sustained relative stability in the region" during its presence (101).

Assessing the intervention

The entire mission has been a remarkable accomplishment and it has been credited for facilitating Macedonia's transition from a Communist regime and improving the newly-established state's confidence (Bellamy 128). This was of crucial importance and urgency in the case of Macedonia, being an infant nation with an unstable political, economic and social situation and whose territorial integrity was threatened by the war ravaging in Yugoslavia.

One of the main factors leading to the success of the operation in Macedonia was the remarkable coordination between all the parties that partook in the mission. First, the operation was led and organised by the Nordic countries. This gave the mission a very cohesive plan and a concrete line of action, following specific directives from a joint command structure that optimised the implementation of the deployment. One of the explanations for this efficient effort is what Bjorkdahl calls 'Nordic cooperation': indeed, besides having long-lasting historical and cultural ties, the Nordic countries have collaborated with one another several times on a political level, allowing the achievement of a remarkable operational efficiency (67). Additionally, it is possible that one of the reasons that created such a cohesive operation could have been the fact that the international community had already one foot on the ground in the region, as it was involved in preventive action missions in the former Yugoslavia. It is likely that this might have quickened the deployment of troops on the Macedonian border, as well as already having acquired a relevant experience of the region through the previous operations. Once again, the timing was also a crucial variable, both from Macedonia's side in requesting the aid of the UN, as well as from the latter deploying a preventive action operation within a few months from the official appeal of the Macedonian government.

Second, another influential element was the intervening countries' willingness to install a conflict prevention operation on the ground. Due to the fact that the international community was already involved in the Balkans, the deployment of UNPREDEP was undoubtedly easier and quicker. The international community was determined to avoid Macedonia from being carried into the void of the Yugoslav conflict, and therefore reacted promptly and wholeheartedly to the crisis. Furthermore, the prevention of the potential Macedonian conflict

is even more remarkable if one considers that due to the historical, cultural and ethnic ties with Yugoslavia the violence spillover was a concrete possibility.

Third, the legitimisation of UNPREDEP by Macedonian authorities played a fundamental role as well. Many have hailed President Gligorov as the main actor that facilitated the successful preventive action operation by firstly negotiating the retreat of Yugoslav forces from Macedonian soil and secondly requesting the intervention of the international community, following an 'active neutrality' approach towards the situation at hand (Ackermann 414). It is important to point out that the fact that Gligorov officially appealed for a UN intervention was a driving factor in legitimising the deployment of the operation: as previously discussed, the fact that the authorisation process of the operation came from within Macedonian borders is a determining key point for a successful mission. As Marks claims, although Macedonia is located in a region where ethnicity-based conflict has in multiple occasions escalated into conflicts (the Yugoslav war above all), this country has managed to remain somewhat peaceful, and the case of the UN preventive action operation – requested by Gligorov – seems to be another proof of this assumption (293).

As in the case of Albania, the nature of the crisis in Macedonia was also important: the prevented conflict did not present any identity traits. The hostilities were expected to take place in the country as a result of a spillover effect from Yugoslavia, with Serbian troops possibly invading Macedonia. Although the Yugoslav conflict was an identity, it is unsure whether the violence spillover would have carried the element of ethnicity with itself. Although Macedonia did have some tensions between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, this was not what pushed President Gligorov to request UNPREDEP, as it was not perceived to be such an urgent matter. Therefore, the nature of the potential war was an important variable in this case as well and gave the mission a clear objective which was evident from the very beginning of the operation.

Among many, these factors have proved to be conducive to the successful deployment of UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP in Macedonia, making this mission an international guide for preventive action. As Stefanova puts it, "the UN performance in Macedonia has been remarkable", although it does not guarantee the achievement of a meaningful peace in the region (113). The conflict prevention operation in the country have completed a task that was considerably more difficult than one would expect, given the proximity of the war in Yugoslavia and the many and deep-rooted ties between the two countries. The preventive action mission that took place in Macedonia could be defined as a mixture between operational

and structural prevention. Precisely, the deployment took place when the conflict seemed imminent and was aimed to prevent it, eventually also succeeding in strengthening the state structures and providing the country with increasing long-lasting peace.

Yugoslavia

The third and last case study of this thesis discusses is that of the fall of Yugoslavia. For roughly a decade, the entire region has been devastated by a violent civil war that caused about 140.000 casualties and 4 million refugees (Transnational Justice in the Former Yugoslavia). This chapter illustrates that several organisations and institutions were to different extents aware of how the situation was unfolding dangerously in the country. Nevertheless, the international community could not manage to achieve a cohesive strategic plan in order to prevent the break out of violence. With the rise to power of the populist Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, the Federation undertook a dangerous path consisting of nationalistic rhetoric and instigating controversial ethnic hatreds between the different inhabitants of Yugoslavia. As these events unfolded, the international community has proved itself incapable

of preventing the breakout of violence in the first place. Additionally, once it did, it did not manage to implement meaningful peacekeeping operations, allowing additional bloodshed and protracted conflict. This chapter demonstrates that where the missions in Macedonia and Albania succeeded, the one in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) dramatically failed. For these reasons, the civil war that took determined the dismemberment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia became one of the most infamous instances of failed conflict prevention in practice.

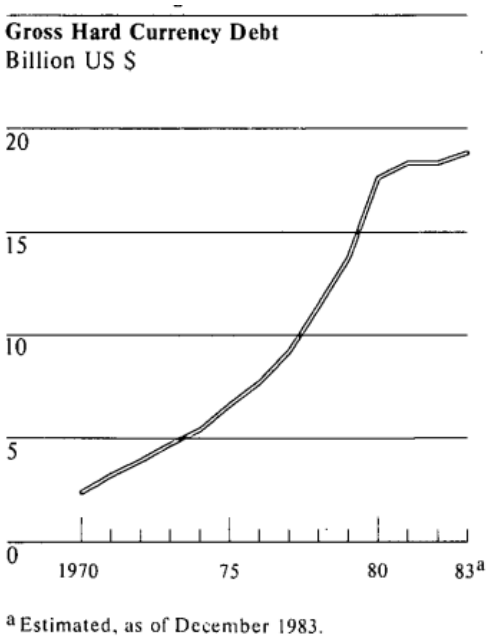
Setting the stage for intervention

As Raimo Vayrynen puts it, "Yugoslavia's road to political breakup […] was neither sudden nor unpredictable" (27). Several scholars argue that the death of Yugoslavia's long-time leader Josip Tito in 1980 was the 'beginning of the end' for the Federation.[8] Bunce explains that these changes were somewhat effective as long as Tito was in power, as he operated as a "hegemonic power" within the republics, in collaboration with the fact that socialism played an essential role in providing a shared ideology with a unifying effect (710-711). However, a combination of disruptive events changed the course of events in the span of roughly two decades.

The first crack in Yugoslavia's stability was the death of Tito, who passed away in 1980. Although it was rather predictable given the old age, the Yugoslav Federation found itself lacking a dominant figure to refer to and that had a centralising role in domestic politics. The absence of a 'strong man' of sorts contributed to create chaos and political disorientation in the country. Secondly, a serious economic crisis afflicted Yugoslavia at the end of the 1970s: Wilmer explains that the stagnated global economy created a critical currency devaluation and massive unemployment throughout the whole country (97). According to Sik, the economic hardship was partially due to the decentralisation of governmental institutions, as there was a lack of a concrete central monetary policy (365). The situation was extremely negative for Yugoslavia, as Ramet illustrates that by 1983 the inflation rate was at 30%, and the national debt had amounted to $20 billion and evermore increasing (328). In the following years the government was unable to revert the trend which kept on worsening and in 1989 the inflation rates had risen to a shocking 800-1000% (Ramet 363). The combination of a lack of political

[8] Bunce dates the first cracks back to 1974, with the adoption of a new constitution. She explains that by attempting to achieve state unity and a fair representation for all the national groups, the constitution eventually presented two unpredicted side effects: firstly, it strengthened the importance of the military (which also became increasingly more manipulated by Serbia), and secondly it weakened state institutions by transferring consistent powers to the republics. Both of these factors played a fundamental part in shaping the events in the years that led up to the break out of the civil war (710-711).

stability and economic prosperity is often quite dangerous, as the rise of political extremism as a consequence is not unlikely.



(Yugoslavia: Key Questions and Answer on the Debt Crisis 8)

This is evident in the late 1980s, with the rise of the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, who seized the opportunity to obtain political power based on the popular malcontent and at the same time worsened the mounting crisis in the country (Ramet 341). After a rather controversial rise through the political ranks, he established himself as the ruling persona in Serbia and began promoting his extremely nationalistic program. Once in power, he launched a nationalist movement with a populist, post-communist connotation (Oberschall 992).[9] Bunce believes that one of the reasons to explain the increasing separation between the republic was that by the end of the 1980s socialism was no longer capable of functioning as the ideological glue to unite the different countries. This stems from the fact that the economic and political issues that Yugoslavia had experienced in the previous decade had posed considerable questions: whether the socialist experiment could really work (713).

Milosevic's agenda was an ambitious one, which saw as ultimate outcome the creation of a Greater Serbian rule over the whole of Yugoslavia, starting from the autonomy-seeking provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina (Friedman 59). Additionally, he made of ethnicization a

[9] In addition to a strong nationalist and pro-Serbian he also started turning Serbs against the old Yugoslav regime, whose it was the fault for weakening Yugoslavia. On May 4th 1988 for instance, which was a day dedicated to the commemoration of Tito, around 2.000 Serbian nationalist marched in protest in Belgrade singing chants against the old leader, destroying his effigies and anything else that carried his name (Ramet 346).

fundamental point in his political campaign, repeatedly assailing – first verbally, later on militarily – members of other minorities, discriminating on an ethnicity basis. The final point on Milosevic's agenda was to carry out a systematic ethnic cleansing throughout the regions that he believed to be part of the Greater Serbia, so that it would only be populated by ethnic Serbs (Ramet 429).

Croatia and Slovenia were considerably worried by Milosevic's rhetoric and political program. The first was especially in a precarious condition, as it presented a Serb minority within its territory that added up to 12.2% of the population, the so-called Krajina Serbs (Ramet 364). This group quickly became a pretext for political tensions between the Serbia and Croatia, as Milosevic started behaving rather aggressively towards them (Horncastle 746). Nevertheless, the result of Serbian provocations triggered the rise of a Croat nationalist movement, captained by what could be defined Milosevic's nemesis, Franjo Tudjman. Indeed, he was as inclined as Milosevic to use an "ethnonationalistic rhetoric", sharpening the tensions between Croats and Serbs and within Yugoslavia (Maley 561). Milosevic's aggressive behaviour towards Croatia and his plan for a Greater Serbia created both fear and indignation among Croats, thus sparking a renewed wave of nationalism (Ramet 369). If Croatia had contentions with Serbia mostly on territorial and ethnic grounds, Slovenia's issues with Belgrade were chiefly political: Ljubljana was increasingly unsettled by Serbian nationalistic policies, and accused Milosevic of 'Stalinism', while being addressed as traitors (Ramet 364). Like the Croats, the Slovenes disapproved of the Greater Serbia plan, and had no intention to renounce their legitimate sovereignty. Additionally, Slovenia was the most economically advanced republic of Yugoslavia, with a diversified economy and consistent trade relationships with Western Europe. Consequently, one of the main points of contention was the fact that Ljubljana was pushing for a series of decentralisation policies in order to free themselves from the burden of supporting the poorer republics (Bunce 712).[10]

As a consequence of the mounting and protracted tensions with Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia declared independence in June 1991 (Wilmer 100). This was an implicit declaration of war to Belgrade and Milosevic's aspirations for a Greater Serbian rule over Yugoslavia, fundamentally the root of his political program and propaganda. On one hand, Slovenia was of

[10] Somer illustrates that the ongoing debate saw wealthier regions (such as Slovenia) advocating for more autonomy and even independence in order to contribute less to the poorer areas. On the other hand, the impoverished regions argued that they were exploited in order to provide raw materials, and thus wanted more support from the central government (139).

minor interest to Milosevic, and thus managed to obtain its concrete independence within ten days and managed to remain impartial during the civil war (Maley 562). Indeed, possibly due to the very high percentage of ethnic unity and the very low percentage of Serbs – 97.7% of the people living in Slovenia were 'ethnic Slovenes' (Hodson et al. 1543) – it seemed that Serbia had somewhat accepted the fact that Slovenia was most likely not going to be part of the Greater Serbia plan. Therefore, the Slovenian independence war lasted only ten days, from its declaration of independence until the 5th of July 1991 (Ramet 396). Unfortunately, Milosevic did not have the same plans for Croatia. Its independence and expansionistic aspirations in Bosnia were diametrically opposed to the Serbian leader's plans, as he planned to incorporate consistent parts of its territory into the Greater Serbia, including the Krajina Serbs territory. Consequently, the Yugoslav People's Army began its offensive in Eastern Croatia on the 3rd of July 1991.

However, the main battleground between the competing forces was Bosnia-Herzegovina. The republic's population is extremely fragmented between three major groups: in 1991, the Bosnian Muslims composed roughly 45% of the population, the Bosnian Serbs added up to 33% and the Bosnian Croats were about 16% (Szasz 690-691). Consequently, both Serbia and Croatia had territorial claims on the region. The first was still on the quest to form a Greater Serbia and intended including the entirety of the Serbs scattered around Yugoslavia in it, while the latter was firstly committed not to be part of such a state and had claims on the Croat-inhabited areas of Bosnia. The policies of ethnic cleansing carried out by Serbian forces dramatically changed the demographic scenario in the region: in 1991 Serbs were roughly 625.000 and Croats and Muslims 550.000, while three years later the first had increased to 875.000 as the second plummeted to 50.000 (War Crimes in Bosnia-Hercegovina: U.N. Cease-Fire Won't Help Banja Luka). Although attempts to divide Bosnia into cantons had been made, none party involved was satisfied with the repartition of the region, in addition to the fact that the three minorities were not living in precisely divided areas, thus rendering the process considerably more complex (Szasz 691). [11] At this point in time it was hardly possible to find a common ground between all the parties involved, seen the extent to which the ethnic hatred and nationalistic feelings fuelled by political leaders had escalated. The conflict broke out

[11] Ramet explains how in 1992 the Portuguese diplomat José Cutilheiro proposed a division of Bosnia which would give 44% of the republic to Serbia and 12% to Croatia, leaving the remaining 44% to Bosnia itself. However, the parties could not come to an agreement in regards to this plan (417-418).

violently in Bosnia, which was arguably the most afflicted republic of the former Yugoslavia, eventually leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees.

Therefore, it is possible to see how the situation in Yugoslavia was considerably more complex than it was in Albania or Macedonia. The intricate ethnic fragmentation was a thorny issue that was extremely difficult to solve, and thus the international community faced a much more complicated task due to the nature of the conflict. In addition, the complex ethnic division of Yugoslavia was instrumentalised by leaders such as Milosevic, using it as a pretext for war. This seems to have triggered a fierce reaction from all the parties involved, which eventually degenerated into a bloody civil war. Once these inflammatory policies had obtained their result, it became impossible to stop the rivalries between the different factions, and the ethnicity-ignited conflict spread like wildfire.

The (missed) intervention

Despite the clear signs of an imminent war, the international community's response to the deepening crisis failed to come. The United Nations and the European Commission were very likely aware of the events that were taking place in Yugoslavia. The most striking piece of data regarding the conditions in Yugoslavia probably comes from a 1990 report drafted by the CIA, which predicts with extreme accuracy the nation's future. For instance, the paper expects that "Yugoslavia will cease to function as a federal state within a year" and that prolonged warfare will take place throughout the country until its breakup (Yugoslavia Transformed iii). Therefore, it seems evident that the international community was well aware of the danger that the Yugoslav state was in, but a reaction still failed to come.

At first, the EC was firmly committed to the preservation of the Yugoslav state as a whole, and thus countered Slovene and Croat secessions. This was one of the most serious mistakes committed by the international community as Bunce believes that if the western powers had decided to cooperate closely for a peaceful division of Yugoslavia, the breakup might have descended into a civil war (713). However, Germany officially recognised their independence in December 1991, triggering a domino effect in which several states followed in officialising the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, including the United States in April 1992 (Wilmer 100). This move was rather reckless for several reasons. Firstly, by recognising Croatia as an autonomous state, they left a small but still concrete Serbian minority within the country, which had no guarantee of recognition of any right, and considering the waves of nationalistic feelings that characterised the region at that point, it did not seem likely. Secondly,

they put Bosnia in a stalemate position in which the country either had to accept to remain part of a Yugoslavia ruled by Serbia or declare independence and unleash a bloody conflict within its own borders between Serbs, Croats and Muslims (Bunce 714). Thirdly, by recognising Croatia and Slovenia's independence, the international community indirectly took a stance in their favour against Serbia, which was also a dangerous move.

Therefore, the international community remained in a state of quasi-inaction for several years, which allowed the warring factions to open fire on each other. In fact, the little that was done actually worsened the situation. For instance, besides the recognition of the new Slovenian and Croatian states, the UN Security Council enforced trade sanctions and arms embargo in 1992. This in turn left the Bosniaks in a position of military disadvantage with the Serbs (Ramet 432). If one considers the outbreak of the war to be Slovenia's declaration of independence in 1992, the international community spectated the events for three years. However, if one considers the fact that the situation in Yugoslavia had been deteriorating since Milosevic's rise to power and consequential implementation of aggressive policies, which dates back to 1989, the international community has reacted rather slowly to the way events were unfolding.

There are several explanations for the failure of the international community to react timely to a rather obvious worsening crisis. Firstly, the European institutions that found themselves dealing with the Yugoslav conundrum were all relatively young and never had to face such a challenge. Secondly, the political balances in Europe were undergoing a period of readjustment as a consequence of the end of the Cold War and especially in the relationships with a new reunified Germany. In other words, "the disorder of Europe after the Cold War was displayed on the field of a rapidly disintegrating Yugoslav state" (Bunce 713). At that point in time, the United Nations were the only organisation capable of somewhat dealing with the Yugoslav crisis, legitimately including Russia and the United States in the management of the situation (Vayrynen 22).

The (actual) intervention

In February 1992, the United Nations Security Council passed the Resolution 743, officially allowing the dispatch of a United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), convinced that UN peacekeeping will help Yugoslavia in reaching a "peaceful settlement" (UN Resolution 743 9). However, by the time the peacekeepers had been deployed, the conflict had broken out already: as the concept of preventive action is to *prevent* a conflict

from breaking out as it is more cost-effective, this was by no means the best way to start (Lund 289). Despite the deployment of several peacekeeping troops to mostly Croatia and Bosnia, the peace seemed considerably harder to create (and keep) than expected,[12] and the international community was still internally divided on the measures to take. On the ground, Bosnia was demanding for support by the UN in the form of air strikes against Bosnian Serbs, and although this position was backed by US President Bill Clinton, the UN Security Council could not reach a consensus, and UN Security General Boutros-Ghali could not make a final call (Ramet 444-445). As a consequence, through the Resolution 836, the UN Security Council authorised the UNPROFOR peacekeepers to deter attacks on civilians with the use of force; Yasushi Akashi (a special UN envoy) argues that this move put the troops on the ground in a difficult position, having the task of carrying out peacekeeping operations as well as peace-enforcement, adding additional confusion to the coordination of the mission (314).

As the war proceeded, the UNPROFOR could not counter a full-fledged warfare waged by well-equipped armies effectively. Even after the attack and massacre in the Srebrenica safe area in July 1995 – which saw tens of thousands of civilians slaughtered overnight – the UN Security General Boutros-Ghali was quoted saying that diplomatic negotiations were still the only tool to find a solution to end the war (Ramet 462). Eventually, by late August of the same year, NATO started carrying out protracted air strikes on Serb forces: the final drop that triggered a concrete military action was the combination of the murder of three American diplomats a month after Srebrenica and a deadly mortar attack in Sarajevo that had killed 38 civilians and injured 85 (Wilmer 101-102). Consequently, this led Milosevic, Tudjman and Bosniak leader Izetbegovic to the negotiations table, which took place in Dayton, Ohio.

Assessing the intervention

The involvement (or lack thereof) of the international community in the former Yugoslavia can be defined overall as not particularly successful for several reasons. Before the conflict broke out, it was quite clear that the whole region was experiencing dangerous tensions and was ultimately reaching the brink of armed conflict. The CIA report from 1990 demonstrated that the level of intelligence they had gathered was more than sufficient to predict confidently what was bound to happen. Therefore, several options of preventive action could have been evaluated in order to avoid any side taking up arms against the other. However, the international community did not take any countermeasure to prevent this from happening. In

[12] France, Great Britain, The Netherlands and Spain were among the largest contributors of peacekeepers (Ramet 445).

addition to this prolonged inaction, a number of decisions taken at an international level have actually sharpened the tensions within the country. The most important was Germany's recognition of Slovenia and Croatia's independence, followed by several other countries, which increased the hostilities with Serbia and put Bosnia in a difficult position (Bunce 714). What seems to be one of the most likely explanations for Western inaction lies in the political (dis)order in Europe between the end of the 1980s and the 1990s, caused by the end of the Cold War, the fall of the USSR, the reunification of Germany and the infant stage of regional organisations. These factors combined contributed to create a rather chaotic political situation in Europe, which was counterproductive in the efforts of finding a common ground to take appropriate action in Yugoslavia.

First, coordinated operations with an efficient chain of command are a key factor conducive to a successful preventive action operation. However, once the peacekeeping operations were launched in early 1992, there did not seem to be a concrete organisational structure that led the operation at a managerial level. This lack of coordination – which led to several operational flaws – is partially due to the fact that the leadership of the de-escalation and containment attempts kept on changing. In the first place, the EC was appointed as the organisation in charge to address the problem and made some efforts, although unfruitful. What complicated things further was that within the EC itself there were internal disagreements on the direction of the policies towards Yugoslavia and the absence of ad-hoc institutions to contain the rising tensions (Vayrynen 21). Furthermore, the UN faced a similar problem as well, as some members were advocating for air strikes against the Serb army, while others were convinced that an arms embargo would bear better results. These disagreements resulted in additional discussions as to which policy to implement, when instead swift and cohesive actions was required, as the war proceeded and caused further bloodshed. Consequently, it is possible to see that there was no coordination and no shared agreement on the direction to follow regarding the preventive action policies to implement, which allowed for the conflict to drag on and cause more deaths.

Second, an additional prerequisite for successful conflict prevention is the preventing country's political willingness to intervene. For several reasons, the international community was not entirely willing to intervene in a comprehensive way, resorting firstly to sanctions and embargos (which had meagre results), and only later deploying a peacekeeping mission backed by occasional air strikes. As Vayrynen argues, the failure of the preventive action missions in Yugoslavia should be attributed to the "reluctance or inability to conduct limited enforcement

operations" (26). Consequently, the international community intervened rather half-heartedly in the conflict, and as it has been the case, inappropriate preventive action might result in more harm than complete inaction (Lund 297).

Third, preventive action operations are usually more successful if required or allowed by the leaders of the states at war. In both the case of Macedonia and Albania, the respective presidents have officially requested an intervention by the international community in order to safeguard the security of their own citizens. However, this has not been the case in Yugoslavia. Due to the fact that he did not want nor appeal for an intervention by the UN or NATO, and when it took place, it became more of an intrusion in Serb domestic politics rather than a preventive action operation in Milosevic's eyes. On the contrary, one could argue that the warring parties' leaders did not want a conflict prevention mission, but military aid from the international community. As aforementioned, Izetbegovic repeatedly requested air strikes against the Bosnian Serb troops, suggesting that he was not interested in the hostilities to stop until he had reached his objectives.

Additionally, the global political scenario was a peculiar one. Due to the end of the fall of the Soviet Union the international community was facing a new world order, which required an adjustment period. The same situation is applicable to Europe, as a reunified Germany was reintegrating in the regional relationships in the continent. In other words, "the disorder of Europe after the Cold War was displayed on the field of a rapidly disintegrating Yugoslav state" sums it up exemplarily (Bunce 713). Lastly, although the mission in Yugoslavia did not bear the expected results, it seems as if the international community learnt from its mistakes in the Balkans, carrying out two successful preventive action operations in Macedonia and in Albania.

It is important to note that the nature of the Yugoslav war was a particularly complex one, as it was an identity conflict based on ethnicity. This factor hindered the attainment of a successful preventive action operation, as identity conflicts are known to be considerably more difficult to resolve. Furthermore, in the cases of Albania and Macedonia the ethnicity component was not as relevant as it was in Yugoslavia (which also presented the issue of religious differences). Even if the international community had engaged itself in more efficient preventive action operations, the objective was considerably more complex than in Albania or Macedonia. The most important obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the tensions was the fact that the different ethnic groups were scattered throughout Yugoslavia and intermixed with each

other: consequently, the creation of several provinces based on the different ethnicity was an unfeasible option. As a consequence, the objectives of the international community were not as clear as they were in Albania or Macedonia once they were deployed on the ground. Thus, despite the operational mistakes made by the international community, the complex nature of the Yugoslav conflict was a major factor hindering the implementation of conflict prevention due to its multifaceted nature.

Therefore, it is possible to see how the international community failed to prevent the breakout of the war due to internal political dissents, and later on did not manage to prevent the conflict from escalating into the bloodiest one since WWII. Because of a combination of lack of coordination, cohesive political will to intervene and the legitimisation of the intervention, the entirety of the operation became the most prominent example of failed conflict prevention. However, although the international community undoubtedly made some crucial judgment and operational mistakes, the civil war that took place in Yugoslavia was arguably unique, as was the political situation in Europe and in the world. It is true that the theoretical framework for preventive action had been theorised long before and that it was also implemented in other situations, however the blurred lines between the ethnic and the political nature of the conflict, might have made the formulation of a meaningful preventive action framework more difficult.

Conclusion

In conclusion, conflict prevention theory has proved to be a considerably more complicated framework to apply on the ground. Several scholars have endeavoured to formulate a best practice regarding how preventive action should be implemented drawing both from theory as well as from empirical evidence. This paper has analysed three of the main factors that are deemed to play an important role in determining the outcome of a conflict prevention operation, namely (1) its coordination, (2) political will, and (3) the legitimisation of the state in which the preventive action mission is taking place. Consequently, this thesis attempted to investigate whether and to which extent these three factors were conducive to a successful outcome or not in three instances of conflict prevention operations: the 1997 Operation Alba in Albania, the 1993 UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP operation in Macedonia and

lastly the 1992 UNPROFOR operation in the former Yugoslavia. The first two cases are examples of a successfully carried out conflict prevention operation, as the international community was able to prevent a rather critical situation from escalating into open conflict. In both instances the three factors determining the outcome of the missions seem to be present, and to play an important role.

Albania

Operation Alba was deployed in Albania as a result of a deteriorating situation in the country, which was about to burst into open armed conflict. The crisis was caused by several factors; firstly, the authoritarian-leaning government led by Sali Berisha and secondly an economic crisis caused by the collapse of the so-called financial pyramid scheme. The combination of these two factors triggered widespread upheaval throughout the country to the point that the government could not reassert power over some of the region. The main objective of the mission was to provide humanitarian aid, re-establish a relative level of security within the country and to create the conditions for a new round of elections.

Firstly, the operation was exemplarily coordinated. Indeed, the Italo-Greek joint leadership, backed by other countries allowed for the establishment of an efficient chain of command, which gave the operation a clear purpose from its very beginning, a common line of action and cohesive cooperation altogether.

Secondly, both Italy and Greece were extremely determined to intervene in a decisive manner in Albania, and therefore the impact of the operation was meaningful; this was partially due to the fact that both countries were indirectly concerned about their own security, given the geographic proximity and economic ties with Albania.

Thirdly, Operation Alba was officially requested by the Albanian President Sali Berisha: this has also proved to be a crucial factor as it provided the mission with the legitimacy to intervene in a sovereign nation state's territory. Consequently, these three variables proved to be determining in allowing Operation Alba to be carried out quickly and efficiently, preventing Albania from collapsing and creating the grounds for state (re)building and for new elections to be held. Furthermore, the timing of the intervention was crucial, as the troops were deployed when the civil war was about to break out.

Macedonia

The case of the UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP preventive mission in Macedonia presented the same results as Operation Alba. The operation was deployed on request of President Kiro

Gligorov, who was afraid that the civil war in Yugoslavia would spill over into his country as well. Indeed, after having declared independence from the Yugoslav Federation, he was concerned of a Serb offensive, in combination with internal tensions between different factions. Consequently, the UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP troop's main task was to patrol the Macedonian borders and to monitor the movements of Serb battalions, in order to avoid any trespassing into the country.

The operation was led by the NordBatt, a contingent constituted by Nordic countries, which gave coordination and cohesiveness to the operation. Once again, the establishment of an efficient chain of command allowed for a swift deployment of the troops on the ground and for a successful implementation of preventive action operations.

Secondly, the intervening countries were determined to keep Macedonia out of the Yugoslav civil war, which was sustaining heavy casualties: therefore, the implementation of preventive action was carried out decisively and stopped the country from getting involved in the civil war that was taking place on the other side of its borders.

Thirdly, UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP was legitimised by the official request of President Kiro Gligorov, who realised that if Macedonia were to stay impartial in the Yugoslav conflict, he needed to appeal to the international community for aid. Therefore, the preventive action operation deployed in Macedonia has been defined by many as the first instance of relatively successful conflict prevention, partially because of these three factors.

Yugoslavia

The case of the UNPROFOR mission in Yugoslavia is one of the most infamous examples of failed conflict prevention. The Federation was experiencing some sharp internal tensions on a political level, mainly as a result of Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic's inflammatory speeches, who made use of an ethnonationalistic rhetoric and aimed to establish a Greater Serbian rule over Yugoslavia. As a consequence, after Slovenia and Croatia's declaration of independence, a bloody conflict broke out, which saw Bosnia as the major battlefield – on which both Croatia and Serbia had territorial claims. In this case, the international community was extremely slow to react and deploy a preventive action operation. Although the breakout of the conflict was by no means unexpected and there is proof that several organisations were aware of the deteriorating situation in the region, no concrete action followed. This is to be attributed to a number of causes: firstly, the European institutions established to manage such crises were relatively young and had never faced such a challenge.

Secondly, the political balances in the world but within Europe especially had just dramatically changed as a result of the end of the Cold War: with the fall of the Soviet Union, the world had to readjust to a new global order the European states reassess their relationships with a reunified German state. Therefore, the political chaos in Europe was one of the main reasons of its lack of involvement in preventive action in Yugoslavia (Bunce 713).

Once a peacekeeping operation was deployed on the ground, the conflict had already broken out, considerably decreasing the chances of a successful outcome of the mission. Initially, the UNPROFOR's mandate was to protect civilians from the violent war by transferring them in 'safe areas' (of which Srebrenica was one). Additionally, the international community attempted to deter the continuation of fighting by imposing embargos and sanctions, but with scarce results, resorting then to contained air strikes. It was only in 1995, after the Srebrenica massacre, the murder of three diplomats and a mortar attack on the Sarajevo market that the international community decided to take a firmer stance. This eventually managed to have Serb leader Milosevic, Croat leader Tudjman and Bosniak leader Izetbegovic sit at a negotiations table, after a conflict that saw between 150.000 and 200.000 casualties and 4 million refugees.

Firstly, the UNPROFOR mission was hardly well organised and coordinated. Once the mission was deployed on the ground, the lack of a clear coordinating unit was one of the major issues: the EC, UN, NATO and eventually the US rotated several times taking the lead of the operation, causing considerable confusion on the ground. Additionally, there was also no cohesive agreement on the policies to implement, both within the EC as well as within the UN, which caused extensive discussions as the war proceeded.

Secondly, the intervening countries were not entirely willing to do so. This is exemplified by the fact that before launching an actual operation, states limited themselves to official reprimands, sanctions and embargos: in other words, there was quite some reluctance to intervene in the conflict (Varynen 26). This half-hearted intervention of sorts was highly inefficient and superficial, and inappropriate action might cause more damage than complete inaction.

Thirdly, the deployment of UNPROFOR on the ground was not requested nor really accepted by any of the warring parties, and therefore it lacked legitimisation. In the case of Albania and Macedonia, the intervention was requested in order to safeguard the citizens' security, while in the case of Yugoslavia this did not happen. On the contrary, it seemed as if

the only intervention that was requested by the warring parties' leaders was a military offensive against their opponents (Ramet 444-445).

An additional important element that partially characterised the events in the three cases was the nature of the conflict. As argued by Fortna, identity conflicts are considerably harder to address and manage. In the case of the Albanian and Macedonian prevented wars, the element of ethnicity was either absent or not particularly relevant. In both these cases the nature of the conflict was rather straightforward, and thus the formulation of a clear objective for the deployment of the mission was noticeably easier. On the other hand, due to the fact that the Yugoslav conflict was based on identity and ethnicity, the lines were considerably more blurred. Consequently, it was more difficult for the international community to frame a clear objective for the operation, as the conflict was much more complex and multifaceted. The nature of the hostilities has therefore been an additional discriminating factor, which has subsequently affected the outcome of the conflict prevention operation by the international community.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis has demonstrated that the presence or absence of the factors analysed have played a crucial role in Albania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia. Indeed, there seems to be a causal link between their presence in a conflict prevention operation and its positive outcome as well as between their absence and a negative outcome. However, it is fundamental to point out that there are several additional factors that play a role in the breakout of a civil war and in the policies that are implemented to prevent this from happening, which this paper has not analysed. Preventive action theory and practice is one of the most compelling challenges to international politics due to the multi-faceted nature of wars, especially if dealing with civil wars and identity conflicts. Therefore, further research into the factors that cause a conflict prevention operation to be successful in a specific circumstance is advised, as there are many other underlying factors that play a role in the outcome of such missions. Furthermore, it is also important to note that as the case studies analysed in this thesis are located in an extremely limited geographic area, the conclusions that this thesis has reached are only applicable to the Balkan region. Thus, when conducting additional research on preventive action implementation in other regions and continents, it is possible that the factors analysed in this thesis will play a different role and that others will be more relevant to the case in question.

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