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The Matter of Consistency within the European Union: Why Did the EU Fail to Devise a Coherent Policy in the Bosnian War?

Mehmet DENİZ

Dr., mehmet35deniz@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-2264-4339.

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Abstract

The Bosnian War witnessed horrifying humanitarian crimes, particularly systematic rapes perpetrated by Serbs against Bosnian women. More than 35,000 women and children were subjected to such atrocities in Serb-run "rape/death camps". Additionally, the fall of Srebrenica resulted in the loss of thousands of civilian lives. International intervention to halt the Bosnian War faced challenges and complexities. Various countries involved in the matter held differing interpretations of the conflict, leading to diverse views on potential solutions. The lack of consensus and political will hindered the effectiveness of the European Union's intervention efforts. This paper critically examines the international intervention in the Bosnian War, focusing on the approaches of key EU countries: France, Germany, and the UK. These countries' divergent policies and objectives impacted the EU's ability to adopt a coherent stance towards the conflict. The study employs Nuttall and Duke's theoretical approach to consistency in decision-making within the EU to explain why a consistent approach was not achieved during the intervention. By analysing the complexities of the EU's intervention in the Bosnian War, this study seeks to answer the question of what went wrong and provides insights into the challenges of decision-making and consensus-building within the EU.

Keywords: Bosnian War, The European Union, Inconsistency

Introduction

The dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, resulting from the collapse of Communism and the end of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe, marked a significant event. This period of post-Cold War uncertainty witnessed the resurgence of nationalist sentiments, ethnic conflicts, and regional power struggles. Yugoslavia's disintegration led to three ethnic wars in Europe, with the Bosnian War (1992-1995) being the most devastating. Javier Solano, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (henceforth, CFSP), (Solano, 2005: 1) characterized it as "the darkest hour of the wars in the former Yugoslavia" and "the worst atrocity in Europe since the Second World War". One of the most tragic aspects of the Bosnian War was the systematic rape of Bosnian women by Serbian forces. The scale of these crimes was staggering, with over 35,000 women and children held in Serb-run "rape/death camps" (Niod Report, 2002: 640). Houses and hotels were converted into brothels, where women endured prolonged and repeated sexual violence. Additionally, the fall of Srebrenica resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians, with an estimated 7,500 losing their lives (Brunborg et al., 2003: 236).

The Bosnian civil war holds significance for the European Union (henceforth, EU) as it had the potential to unveil whether the EU would adopt decisive measures to cease the aggressions perpetrated by Serbs against the shared values of humanity. Additionally, the crisis highlighted the potential consequences a Balkan conflict could have for European member states, notably Italy and Greece. In this respect, the Bosnian civil war should be considered as the first major test for the EU. Diplomatically, the EU's handling of the Bosnian crisis not only fell short of deterring or slowing the escalation of the conflict into a civil war but actually accelerated it.

France advocated for an active EU role with potential military intervention and airstrikes, the United Kingdom (henceforth, UK) remained cautious but opposed airstrikes, Germany pursued a middle path, and Belgium and Holland supported military intervention while Greece opposed it. This article critically examines international intervention in the Bosnian War, particularly focusing on the EU due to the conflict's taking place in Europe. The EU was expected to play a pivotal role in preventing Serbian nationalists' atrocities against Bosnians. However, the varying perceptions of the Yugoslav Wars, including the Bosnian War, by the leading EU countries (Germany, France, and the UK) profoundly influenced the EU's overall approach to the conflict. These countries failed to agree on the conflict's exact characterization, which, to my understanding, led to significant disparities in policies related to recognition, military involvement, arms embargoes, and airstrikes (Gow, 1997: 182).

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France's policies appeared contradictory due to their initial support for Yugoslav unity but also their efforts to end hostilities and enhance their international standing. Germany, on the other hand, played a key role in recognizing the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, which was, I believe, an extremely premature move and also disrupted the nascent CFSP. However, Germany later sought to normalize relations with EU partners, failing to exhibit the political will needed to address ethnic violence in Bosnia. The UK aimed to impose its own insights on recognition, lifting arms embargoes, and initiating airstrikes against Serbian forces. The UK preferred to act through multilateral bodies, such as the EU, the United Nations (henceforth the UN), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (henceforth NATO), believing that if action were to be taken in Bosnia, it should involve these multilateral organizations. The UK strongly opposed lifting the arms embargo and armed intervention due to a lack of political will, similar to Germany. These differing perceptions and objectives among the three major EU players led to the EU's inability to adopt a consistent and determined stance during the Bosnian War. The lack of consensus, inconsistent policies, and a lack of leadership and political will hindered the EU's efforts to end the violence (Raunio and Saarikivi, 2001:16), resulting in a fragmented approach characterized by uncertainty and disintegration among EU member states.

The study seeks to answer the question of what went wrong during the EU's intervention in the Bosnian War. It examines the issue of consistency in decision-making within the EU, by benefitting from Nuttall (2005) and Duke's (1999) theoretical approach to consistency. The former author deals with the issue of consistency by dividing it into three categories such as "horizontal", "institutional" and "vertical", while the latter analyses it within the confines of "horizontal" and "vertical". Horizontal consistency pertains to the alignment and harmony in the policies pursued by various components of the EU apparatus, while institutional consistency refers to the challenges arising from the EU's decision to address a single policy domain, such as external affairs, through two distinct sets of actors, each characterized by differing oversight and procedural mechanisms. Vertical consistency, on the other hand, pertains to the alignment of the EU with the domestic policies of its member states. The lack of consistency, as demonstrated by the obligations and escape clauses in EU treaties, is highlighted as a key factor contributing to the EU's failure to adopt a coherent approach during the Bosnian crisis.

The article is structured into three parts covering the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the theoretical exploration of consistency within the EU, and the leading countries' approaches to the Bosnian War. The aim is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the complexities surrounding

international intervention in the Bosnian War and the factors that contributed to its challenges and failures.

1. The Brief History of Bosnia-Herzegovina

As is known, Bosnia was a part of the Roman Empire during the initial centuries of the Christian era, like the other provinces of the Mediterranean region. Following the fall of Rome, Bosnia saw Slavic settlements by the 7th century AD with the result that a number of counties and duchies were established in the region. Serbia and Croatia emerged as two neighbouring kingdoms around Bosnia (Serbia on the southeast and Croatia on the west of Bosnia). Bosnia was ruled by local nobles under the control of the Hungarian kings during the 11th and 12th centuries, after that it gained its independence around 1200 AD and remained as an independent country for more than 260 years (Riedlmayer, A. 1995: 2).

In the consequence of the Balkans` conquest by the Ottomans in the late 14th century onward, Bosnia, eventually, became an Ottoman province in 1463. Under the Ottomans` rule, Bosnia experienced some alterations in terms of administrative, religious, ethnical and architectural aspects. Riedlmayer, in his article, (1995: 2) indicates that

> "The Ottoman sultans and their local governors embellished Bosnia`s towns and cities with splendid mosques and established pious endowments that supported schools, Islamic seminaries, libraries, orphanages, soup-kitchens and almshouses".

To be sure, all of these alterations were of pivotal importance, but in terms of their close relations to the topic of this paper, it would be useful to emphasize the shifts in ethnic and religious patterns of the area. Ottomans` tolerance towards the other religions and minorities caused Bosnia to receive considerable amount of migration, which increased the area`s multi-faith and multi-ethnic structure. Riedlmayer, A. (1995: 2) states that "The Ottomans were tolerant of non-Muslim minorities, allowing them full freedom to worship, live and trade as they pleased".

Eventually, Ottomans` sovereignty, which had lasted for over 400 years, in Bosnia came to an abrupt end in 1878 through the agreement among the great powers in Berlin, and the rule of Bosnia was ceded to the Austria-Hungarian Empire. The disintegration of Austria-Hungary Empire right in the wake of the First World War led the entire area and its neighbouring kingdoms to a chaotic state. However, the political unity among the kingdoms in the area -including Bosnia and Herzegovina- was able to be attained in 1929 under the name of "the Kingdom of Yugoslavia" (or merely Yugoslavia).

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The area -under the name of Yugoslavia- saw another disintegration due to the Nazi`s invasion under the leadership of Hitler in 1941, which again led the area to chaos. However, the area was saved from the invaders and, once more, the political stability was achieved through the resistance group called "Partizans" under the command of Josip Broz Tito. At the end of the war, Marshall Tito and his Partizans were considered as the undisputed masters of Yugoslavia. Under Tito`s rule in Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina was re-established as a republic and became one of the six federal republics of Yugoslavia in 1945 in its Ottoman borders.

Figure 1. Post-WW2 Yugoslavia was a federation of six states.

Unfortunately, this condition of political stability would end owing to Tito`s death in 1980. In addition, the collapse of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe and the end of Cold War accelerated the process of disintegration. Furthermore, the rise of Slobodan Milosevic and his extreme Serb nationalist agenda played a crucial role in the process (Niod Report, 2002: 66).

1.2. The Source of Conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The collapse of Communism as an ideology and a state system, the end of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War paved the way for the dissolution of Yugoslavia. At this stage, nationalism emerged as an option for the people in the entire area to fill the gap, because each of Yugoslavia`s member republics wanted to make its own way. These factors, to be sure, can be underlying reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia, but can never account for the ethnic cleansing which turned into a tragedy in the heart of Europe in the 20th century.

The origins of conflict in Bosnia can be dealt with in two dimensions. The first aspect is based on the idea of primordial ties, according to which – in the case of Bosnia in particular- ethnic hatred was embedded deeply within the history of the Balkans. Riedlmayer, A. (1995: 6) states that "Kosovo… famous battle, fought in 1389, that ended medieval Serbia`s independence and began its centuries of subjection to the Islamic Ottoman Empire". The second element is the manipulation of this ethnic hatred by the Serbian elites. Cox (1998: 10) defines this as; "Ethnic mobilisation was a political strategy used by former communist leaders, especially Slobodan Milosevic, to sustain their power following the collapse of communism".

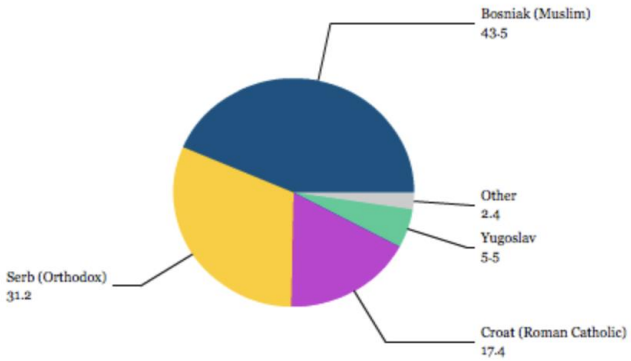

Figure 2. The chart below shows the demographic distribution of Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1991 census (Suffragio, 2013).

The conflict in Bosnia started following the referendum, held in Bosnia in the first days of March 1992, on the independence of Bosnia & Herzegovina. The Croats and Muslims voted in favour of independence, yet the referendum was both boycotted and declared invalid by the Bosnian Serbs with the result that violence broke out and escalated to war in April 1992, at which time Bosnia`s independence was recognised by the International Community.

The Bosnian War continued some 2 years and was put to an end through the negotiation of the Dayton Agreement in November 1995. This was preceded by NATO air strikes over the Serbs in May 1995, after permission was given by the UN (Raunio and Saarikivi, 2001: 9).

April-1992	→ The break out of the Bosnian War
Jan/Feb-1993	→ The failing of Vance-Owen Plan
July-1995	→ Srebrenica massacre
August-1995	→ NATO air-strikes
September-1995	→ The imposition of cease-fire by the USA and other Western nations
November-1995	→ Dayton Peace Agreement

Figure 3. The brief chronology of the Bosnian War.

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2. Theoretical Framework

The decision-making process within the EU stands out as one of the most intricate among multilateral institutions. It involves the active participation of the governments of Member States, the European Parliament, civil services, the European Commission, parliaments, numerous Courts, consultative bodies, various interest groups and Committees. The substantial political divergences across the EU pose challenges in formulating coherent policies grounded in shared principles. The decision-making process within the EU faces significant challenges due to conflicting national interests of the member states, as has often been the case among the permanent representatives of the UN (the United States, Russia, the UK, China and France). The logic behind this is that the most able member or members of the body tend to manipulate the decisions to be taken for the sake of their national political goals.

2.1. Consistency within the EU

The issue of consistency is one of the most significant matters in the EU`s external relations in particular, and it has been included in some important official text regularising the Union`s external relations since 1974 (Nuttall, 2002: 93). This situation indicates that member states have been attaching great importance to the problem of consistency and trying to improve their collective performance by means of institutional and procedural changes. However, to what degree the EU has achieved the desired level in the sense of consistency so far is worth examining in terms of the issues involving particularly European identity and national sovereignty which is closely related to the domestic policies in foreign policy-making.

While it is arguable that consistency is not a sine qua non in every issue and it may not matter very much depending on the particularities of given cases, it does matter a lot if the perception of inconsistency will impair the EU's credibility. On the other hand, the concept of consistency in the EU`s foreign policy is not new and has been mentioned in a number of official texts, but the decision made in the Maastricht Treaty is a milestone on this matter, since it indicates how the EU`s leaders are determined in their pursuit for consistency. In the Maastricht Treaty, the provision regarding consistency is;

> "The Union shall in particular ensure the consistency of its external activities as a whole in the context of its external relations, security, economic and development policies. The Council and the Commission shall be responsible for ensuring such consistency. They shall ensure the implementation of these policies, each in accordance with its respective powers" (Nuttal, 2002: 96).

However, to what degree the above-cited provision is sanctioning when the issues are related to the national political preferences will be handled later on in this part.

2.2. Theoretical Classification of the Concept of Consistency

The perception of consistency can be dealt with at different levels within the EU`s root, depending on the policies, objectives, pillar structures and the national interests of the member states. While Duke (Duke, 1999: 4) deals with the issue of consistency by dividing it into two as "horizontal" and "vertical", Nuttall (2005: 97-98) discusses the issue by dividing it into three as "horizontal", "institutional" and "vertical".

Duke`s definition of horizontal consistency refers to activities of the EU between the Community and CFSP regarding external issues, where he combines horizontal and institutional consistencies in Nuttall`s elaboration. On the other hand, vertical consistency, according to Duke, applies to relations between the Union and the member states when the issue in question is within the sphere of both the Union`s external policy and any individual member state`s domestic policy (Duke, 1999: 4). The focus concerning the theoretical framework of consistency will be on Nuttall`s approach since it is more extended and elaborative.

2.2.1. Horizontal Consistency

Horizontal consistency refers to coherence in the policies pursued by different parts of the EU machinery. In broader terms, any given policy adopted by one pillar or body should not contradict the one agreed in another pillar, which calls for effective arbitration mechanism. The frequently-given example resulting in inconsistency in this sense is the disharmony between the Common Agricultural Policy (henceforth, CAP) and the EU`s development policy. Nuttall (2002:97) states that the coexistence of the CAP, which subsidises exports and on occasion protects the European market, and the EU`s development policy, which encourages its partners to develop their agricultural sectors for exports.

The EU`s handing its external relations over two different bodies is problematic in that it may create a significant problem with respect to fundamental principles of the Union involving human rights. The Bosnian War made it clear that this implementation contradicts with the EU`s main principles and objectives on which it is based.

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2.2.2. Institutional Consistency

It refers to the problems that grow out of EU`s choosing to deal with a single policy realm (i.e. external affairs) by two sets of actors, each of whose scrutiny and procedures are different from each other. Naturally, this brings out inconsistency in most cases. What distinguishes institutional consistency from horizontal one is that any particular foreign policy has been dealt with by two set of bureaucrats. This means approaching any external issue from different angles by different bodies. As a matter of fact, here we come across to "turf wars" between the bureaucrats of first and second pillars. As known, the EU`s foreign policies are formed of external relations, security, economic and development policies. While the external relations and security fields are largely under the authority of second pillar, economic and development policies fall within the competence of first pillar.

However, the increasing rate of cross-pillar activities sometimes leads to dead-lock situations. For example, since the concept of security have naturally been expanded, such issues as conflict prevention or crisis management are considered inherently as inter pillar. In this respect, according to Nuttall (2002: 98), if the EU wishes to impose sanctions, it must adopt both a Common Position or Joint Action, through CFSP procedures involving unanimity, and a Council Regulation, through Community procedures which may involve qualified majority voting".

2.2.3. Vertical Consistency

Vertical consistency is concerned with the relations between the EU and the national policies of the member states. This type of consistency is quite challenging and gives rise to the greatest political difficulties that are difficult to reconcile. When examining some provisions concluded in the European Community Treaty regarding the EU and the national policies, it is clear that the EU`s structure is quite fostering in this type of consistency.

Some provisions can be listed as;

- The member states shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity.
- The member states shall work together to enhance and develop their mutual political solidarity. They shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations.
- The Council shall ensure that these principles are complied with. (Art. 11.2. Consolidated)

- Member states shall ensure that their national policies conform to the Common Positions. (Art. 15)
- Joint Actions shall commit the member states in the positions they adopt and in the conduct of their activity. (Art. 14.3) (Nuttal, 2005: 107).

However, in the case of conflict between member states and the EU on any external issue, there is no sanctioning body. To be sure, there is the European Court of Justice (henceforth, CFSP), but it does not have jurisdiction. This situation lessens the respect and obedience to the above-mentioned provisions by the member states. In addition, the treaty has gaps in it, which enable member states to abstain from the obligations. In this respect, the treaty is subjected to severe criticism. Nuttall (2005:107) suggests that "Indeed, the authors of the treaty seem to have been more concerned with providing the member states with the ways of avoiding their obligations; the text are full of escape clauses which have increased in number over years". Similarly, Duke (1999-9) argues that

> "In spite of the binding nature of the obligations assumed under the CFSP upon the member states, the national identities and the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain member states are safeguarded in several ways by the EU. Although provision is made for the use of qualified majority voting in the second pillar, the practice remained unanimity that safeguards the essential interests of the member states".

Personally, I think the intergovernmental nature of CFSP requiring unanimity and thus enabling each member to pursue their individual policies outside of it brought forth the most compelling impediments in both Yugoslav and Bosnian conflicts. Vertical inconsistency was also experienced in such issues as "lifting arms embargo" and "air strikes" (briefly "lift and strike", was put forward by the US) during the Bosnian War. For instance, French government supported this idea, because since the beginning of the crisis they supported the idea that the conflict should be brought to an end, and this proposal was the only one left after a number of initiatives had been resorted to. By contrast, the UK government strongly opposed to the idea of lift and strike. The underlying reasons behind this opposition were that lifting arms embargo would increase the bloodshed and air strikes would necessitate military intervention. As will be discussed in the following part in "the lack of political will", no governments would desire to risk any financial and military assets. Similarly, Greek government was strongly against the military intervention and air strike. The logic behind this was having good relations with Serbia, limiting the expansion of the influence of Türkiye, whose foreign policy, they believed, since the end of the Cold War had been driven in part by often

unsuccessful endeavour to establish herself as a regional power and tensed relations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Lavdas, 1996: 220). As for Germany, there is no particular account on the German side as regards lift and strike. However, air strikes meant a follow up with ground troops, and it was impossible for the German troops to be deployed due to both the domestic pressure and the constraints included in the German Constitution. Therefore, they did not favour the military mission.

As it is crystal clear, it was impossible for the EU to adopt a coherent approach in the Bosnian conflict. Because, almost all leading members in the EU had different policies and calculations, which usually took precedence over the European approach.

3. France, Germany and the UK's Perceptions of the Yugoslavian War and Their Reflections on the EU's Overall Approach to Yugoslavian and Bosnian Conflicts

International responses to the Yugoslavian War and the following Bosnian conflict were mainly expressed through multilateral bodies such as the EU, the NATO, the UN and the Western European Union (henceforth, WEU) (Gow, 1997: 156). However, despite having some independent character, all of the above-cited bodies` entire course of actions was inevitably subject to the will and individual policies of their most influential members. Concerning the EU, France, Germany and the UK have been the leading and the most influential states behind the activities of the Union during the crisis. Due to not having an exact definition of the crisis, there were clear distinctions in each country`s way of interpreting the conflict, which profoundly affected the course of the war.

3.1. Paris`s Diplomacy with Respect to the Crisis

Initial characterization of the crisis by the French politicians can be considered within the framework of Bonapartist, state-centric terms. Accordingly, accepting the break up of Yugoslavia, in other words, recognizing the independence of Yugoslav republics might have had negative implications over Corsica (Gow, 1997: 159). Therefore, Paris pursued the policy of protecting the unity of Yugoslavia through assigning itself as Belgrade`s old friend in the West, by which France would be able to keep a diplomatic channel to create an opportunity to influence the Serbs. This policy can be interpreted as a political attempt to counter German support for Slovenia and Croatia, as well as to coerce Serbia. However, this policy exacerbated Serbian belligerence, and eventually, France had to withdraw its support for the maintenance of the Yugoslav state. From the late 1991 onward, French politicians directed their attentions towards protecting civilians, and they even agreed

to resort to military force, though under very limited terms, under the UN supervision where and when necessary.

This political shift in France resulted mainly from four reasons. The major reason was the change of government in France. Following the governmental change in Paris, the foreign minister, "pro-Serbian" Roland Dumas was replaced by stricter Alain Juppe (Gow, 1997: 163). Juppe was of the opinion that the military force could be employed as a last panacea if it were to end the Serbian atrocity in Bosnia. While insisting on the military force through the EU and the UN structures, Juppe was also supporting the idea of moving closer to the formal military structures in NATO for practical and immediate outcomes. The second reason was related to the French military staff opinion, General Morillon in particular, concerning the Bosnian War. General Marillon, who was in the service of United Nations Protection Force (henceforth, UNPROFOR) as an officer in Bosnia-Herzegovina and who was initially strongly against the use of military force, became convinced to resorting to military force in certain conditions. Gow (1997: 163) states that "Morillon`s scrutiny had a notable impact on the French government". The third factor for France was the recognition that something had to be done against those responsible for destruction in Bosnia. Because, it became evident for France that it was mainly the Serbs that were responsible for what was happening in Bosnia. The fourth and last element was concerning the human rights violations committed by the Serbs against the Bosnian civilians. According to Gow (1997: 163), the humanitarian aspects of the war in Bosnia had a great impact on President Mitterand`s decision to visit Sarajevo at the end of June, 1992. In the consequence of this visit, Sarajevo airport was opened to international humanitarian aid. Mitterand`s unexpected visit to Sarajevo removed the Serbian siege of Bosnian capital for the first time. This political move not only proved to the UK and Germany that they could take action if they wanted, but also enabled Sarajevo airport to be used by UNPROFOR. Mitterand`s initiative served as a very first step of the series of prospective political attempts that could put an early end to the conflict. However, this initiative could not be appreciated by the other major players.

One of the reasons that helps explain why France was so active when compared to other players was the French priority of asserting itself on the international arena, which was only possible through international bodies (Gow, 1997: 158-159). In this respect, it can be suggested that France played the membership cards of the EU, NATO, WEU and UN Security Council as a permanent member successfully.

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Generally speaking, the French approach to the whole conflict was contradictory, when examining the Yugoslavian Wars and the French policy. However, in terms of its desire to seek an early end to hostilities and of improving France`s position in the international stage, it was consistent. Particularly, deploying troops to Bosnia improved the France's image and kept it a step ahead of Germany (Gow, 1997: 166).

3.2. German Policies towards the Conflict

At the beginning and throughout the developing months of the crisis, Germany strongly supported the unity of Yugoslav state, yet this lasted quite a short time. When the fighting broke out in Slovenia and Croatia, public opinion in Germany begun to change in favour of Slovenia and Croatia`s claims to independence from the communist-led Serbia, which reminded them their sufferings and struggle to become united till the collapse of Communism. Gow (1997: 167) states that

> "For a country filled with the emotion of its own union at the end of the Cold War and celebrating the collapse of Communism throughout Eastern Europe, Slovenia and Croatia were understood as two more countries striving for self-determination and to throw off the communist yoke".

From this point of view, the general public opinion in Germany regarding what happens in Yugoslavia was a war of aggression by the communist-led Serbia and the Yugoslav People`s Army (henceforth, JNA) against the flourishing democracies in Slovenia and Croatia. What`s more, in terms of Germany, it could be interpreted as a war at the end of which either self-determination or unity by force would be justified. Eventually, Germany, under great domestic pressure, decided to support those seeking for independence, and formally and unilaterally recognized Slovenia and Croatia in the late 1991 (Crawford, 1998: 19). The domestic pressure in Germany was such an extent that Chancellor Helmut Kohl received severe criticisms and being accused of supporting the communists from Serbia through the non-recognition of Slovenia and Croatia (Gow, 1997: 167).

Crawford (1998: 20) argues that "What Germany saw was a substantive link between the right for self-determination and international recognition; however, other countries saw it as a tactical move that was solely based on power calculations". This view justifies the argument that French initial support for the Serbian cause as to the unity of Yugoslavia could be to counter the German support for Slovenia and Croatia. In addition, Germany`s unilateral act of recognition both broke the ranks with the rest of the EU members states and critically damaged the embryonic CFSP, with the result that the relations between Germany and the Western powers became soured. This also functioned as catalysing element which not only caused the conflict to spread faster than expected, but also it gave

Serbs an opportunity to reason their cause in attacking Bosnia. After the recognition, Germany directed its attention to re-ordering its spoiled relations with the EU and tried not to offend the other members and players. Therefore, Germany`s forceful initiative during the Slovenian and Croatian conflicts disappeared in the course of the Bosnian crisis. Although making contributions in terms of the delivery of humanitarian aids and carrying out some monitoring posts for the NATO forces, Germany failed to exhibit the required political enthusiasm in the attempts of ending the ethnic violence in Bosnia. German politicians preferred not to take part in the discussions as regards the military intervention. One of the crucial issues leading to hesitation in Germany regarding military intervention was caused by the constraints included in the German Constitution. Accordingly, it was out of question for the German troops to be deployed for any military mission outside NATO (Gow, 1997: 173). That`s why, they could not produce any policy about whether the military force should be resorted to or not, and they preferred to remain somewhere in the middle.

3.3. The UK`s Policies as Regards the Conflict

According to Gow (1997: 174), the UK`s initial analysis of the Yugoslavian conflict was almost like that of French, conservative and restrained. However, it departs from the French initial analysis in that French held the view that Yugoslav state should be sustained, yet the UK`s politicians were able to interpret the war through ethnic and historical angles. In other words, the commonly-held view in the UK was that the Yugoslavian Wars bore, to some extent, the modern dynamics of secession, but to a large extent, ethnic and historic animosity, where they identified the Yugoslav conflict with the Northern Ireland conflict. This situation dampened the UK`s political enthusiasm in making any individual attempt regarding the crisis. Therefore, the UK adopted the policy that rather than acting separately, they would canalize their activities by means of multi-lateral bodies, mainly through the EU but also the UN, NATO, and the WEU. However, this policy does not necessarily mean that the UK was not active during the conflict. Gow (1997: 177) asserts that;

> "In these international bodies, the UK saw not only forums in which to amplify British status on the international scene, but also the framework preventing others from making radical moves which it regarded as unsustainable, rush or running ahead of their own analysis of what such moves might imply".

Within this framework, the UK tried to impose its own vision regarding the issues of a) recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, b) lifting the arms embargo in favour of Bosnia and c) commencing air strikes on Serbian forces in the country.

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Concerning the recognition issue, the UK government of the time was aware that those republics would eventually be recognised, but what mattered for the UK was the timing and conditions of recognition. Those aspects were of paramount importance for the UK analysts, because they supported the theory that in any conflict bearing ethnic characteristics, any external move underpinning one belligerent (Croatia) against the other`s interests (Serbia) could only antagonize the latter and instigate further bloodshed (in Bosnia). In short, the UK believed that without an overall settlement, recognition was nothing else that making the matters worse in the former Yugoslavia. There is a continuous debate as to whether the recognition prompted the Bosnian War. Crawford (1998: 20) argues that "the recognition of Croatia by the international community led to the recognition of Bosnia as an independent state and to a widening of the war". On the other hand, Gow (1997: 171) maintains that "Recognition of Slovenia and Croatia did not, as many have asserted, prompt the war in Bosnia –that had been coming since the previous August-September". The theoretical approach of the UK`s analysts concerning this issue is undoubtedly reasonable. However, it is important to note that each an every ethnic conflict does bear different characteristics depending on historical, economic, political, cultural and religious aspects. The ethnic hatred by the Serbs towards the Bosnians was much deeper than the ones towards the Croats and Slovenes. That`s why, the Bosnian War was, as Gow argues, inevitable, and the issue of recognition just brought it forward.

Regarding the lifting of arms embargo in favour of the Bosnians, the UK was strongly opposed to this idea, mainly claiming that more arms would only encourage reciprocal bloodshed. In addition, to the UK government, even if the arms embargo was partly removed, nobody could guarantee that the Bosnian Army would be victorious. What`s more, the categories of the weapons the Bosnian Army required could only be delivered to the Bosnians by the US support. There was some debate as regards dispatching a large expeditionary force to Bosnia, but no government including the US was willing to commit its ground forces to the area. The UK`s resistance to a military intervention was not caused so much by the concerns as to the complexity of the conflict on the ground, but largely by the fact that there was no political will either in the UK or in any government to realize the idea of expeditionary force. Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary of the time in the UK, states that

> "The only thing which could have guaranteed peace with justice would have been an expeditionary force… And no government, no government has at any time seriously proposed that. And that I think is a line which should run through any analysis because it cuts out so much of the rhetoric which has bedevilled this" (Gow, 1997: 179).

Another issue important for the UK was related to air strikes, which would subsequently necessitate a follow-up with ground troops. This situation raised two questions. The first one was that the UK and other troops might have undertaken this post, yet this would mean preventing the UN soldiers and officials from delivering the humanitarian aids and even risking their lives. At this point, those supporting air strikes, namely France and the US, proposed that the task of follow-up with ground troops could be fulfilled by the Bosnian Army after the withdrawal of UNPROFOR`s forces. However, this would mean providing the Bosnian Army with the necessary weapon, in other words, lifting the arms embargo in favour of Bosnia. Therefore, air strikes were not favoured by the UK government at the outset, but their views about the air strikes altered when the Lieutenant General, Sir Michael Rose was appointed as head of Bosnia Command in UNPROFOR. Gow (1997:180) states that "The UK authorities were obliged to back their own general and persuaded by his judgement that there were very limited objectives which could be achieved by the judicious use of air capability".

In spite of the alterations in their opinion, the UK government held the view that more could be achieved through UNPROFOR rather than difficult course of withdrawal and lifting the arms embargo. Thus, the UK attached great importance to consensual approach in dealing with the conflict, by which they would be able to control or counter-act the others` unilateral and unreasonable moves incompatible with their own visions.

The issues of lifting the arms embargo in favour of Bosnia and air strikes constituted two of the most dramatic aspects of the Bosnian War. It is questionable to what degree it is reasonable to resist both lifting the arms embargo and air strikes when considering the fact that one side was almost disarmed while the other was fully equipped. Andreatta (1997: 6) asserts that

> "The Bosnian Muslims may indeed have fallen victim to moral hazard and to the unrealistic expectation of foreign support which could have diminished the chance for an early settlement. This process may even have been reinforced by the multilateral arms embargo which had been imposed on all parties but penalized Sarajevo most since both Croats and Serbs could count on other sources".

Andreatta supports his argument by claiming that "Also Russia was extremely alarmed by the idea of lifting the embargo and its pro-Serbian stance dramatically emerged when *The Times* uncovered a flow of arms from Russia to the Bosnian Serbs" (Andreatta, 1997:10). In this respect, it is fair to argue that if the lifting of arms embargo had been supported, then the lives of the disarmed side would have been secured. When the Srebrenica massacre is considered, those civilians had neither a chance to protect themselves, nor was there any military force to protect them.

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3.4. What Went Wrong for the EU When It Intervened in the Bosnian War?

There are some different claims with respect to the EU`s approach to the oncoming crisis in Yugoslavia. One of the arguments is that the EU`s attention was stolen due to a number of reasons such as the end of both the Cold War and the Gulf War, Germany`s unification and the Union`s enlargement, so that the EU could not realise the probable threat that is likely to be resulted from the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Lavdas (1996: 217) states that "Troika`s early optimism, reflected in the Brioni Accord, was based on the notion that the Yugoslav crisis could be tackled on an ad hoc basis, beginning with the Slovene issue and, if necessary, dealing with other issues as they emerged". Similarly, Raunio and Saarikivi (2001: 13), state that "The politics until June 1991, when the hostilities broke out in Slovenia, seemed to be "maybe if we ignore the crisis, it will disappear". At this point, one may suggest that the EU lost the chance of an early approach to the Yugoslav conflict in a comprehensive and negotiated way.

Another argument, which I believe is the most salient, is related to the different perceptions of the crisis by the major EU members. This made it impossible for the EU to adopt a common stance in the face of the conflict. However, in the case of Bosnia, it appears that the EU`s actions seem to be far from justification owing to the above-cited reasons, because the Bosnian War broke out when the conflicts were settled first in Slovenia and then Croatia. Therefore, this period of time –some 10 months-, during which the Slovenian and Croatian conflicts took place and then settled, was supposed to be enough for the EU to foresee that ethnic conflict would spread to Bosnia considering both Bosnia`s ethnic patterns and the Serbs` aggressions. By contrast, the failure of the EU in exact characterization of the conflict on the whole and the precedence of the national policies over the EU`s policies were greatly reflected in the Bosnian War. Furthermore, there were a number of obstacles in front of the EU to produce the necessary policies and implement them. The most important reasons can be listed as follows; a) lack of consensus, b) lack of political will and c) the matter of leadership.

3.5. Lack of Consensus

Lack of consensus among the EU is the first significant reason which prevented the Union from making the crucial attempts at the right time. The issue of "lack of consensus" suggests the idea of the dominance of national policies over the EU`s aims and objectives. Lavdas (1996: 219) states that "fragmentation created obstacles to pro-active decision-making, as the national foreign policies assumed precedence over the requirements of a coherent European approach to the crisis".

Unfortunately, this situation frequently gave rise to dead lock situations which made it impossible for the EU to speak with one voice. Raunio and Saarikivi (2001: 18) state that

> "France, Belgium and the Netherlands advocated military actions, and Greece opposed it. In addition, France argued that the EU and NATO should co-operate in the field of military action. The British remained cautious, while the Germans argued that something had to be done but not by German troops".

The inability to reach a consensus originates from the decision-making system of CFSP, which allows each member state to pursue their national interests in critical occasions The decision-making process in CFSP, concluded in the Maastricht Treaty, is based on the idea of consensus that has two strands. The first one is minimalist approach based on consensus decision-making favoured by Britain and France, and the second one is maximalist approach that supports the idea of majority voting favoured by Germany. According to Duke, however, although provision is made for the use of qualified majority voting in the second pillar, the practice remained unanimity that safeguards the essential interests of the member states (Duke, 1999). In addition, apart from national interests, the EU`s ability to adopt a common stance and formulate a common policy at the initial stages of the crisis was hindered by different allegiances that member states had with the component republics of Yugoslavia. Greece`s history of good relations with Serbia, Italy and Austria`s affinities towards Croatia due to both historical and religious grounds led to internal conflicts not only among the member states but between them and the EU. This, sometimes, resulted in the individual political moves by the member states, outside of CFSP framework with little or no consultation of the other members. To be sure, these individual policies deeply hampered the effectiveness of CFSP.

3.6. Lack of Political Will

It would be informative to start the argument with the question of whether the Balkans, though located in the continent of Europe, belongs to Europe or should it be defined as "the Balkans". This debate –prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia- used to be supported by the different camps involved in history due to the uneasy relationship between the Balkans and Europe. According to the Western imagery, The Balkans -where violence, chaos and authoritarian regimes have appeared- have mostly been depicted as an area at odds with "European" values and tradition. Junkos (2005:90) states that "the Balkans have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of "European" and "the Western" has been constructed". Bosnia, located in the heart of the Balkans, resembles the best and the worst image of the Balkans, which

constitutes both ethnic and religious patterns of Bosnia. However, the above-mentioned hypothesis can only be considered as a secondary cause in seeking to an answer for the reasons of lack of political will.

The Bosnian War did not pose any threat to anyone`s fundamental interests, and that`s why, it was interpreted from different angles by the different members of the EU. One may raise the question of how the major players would act if there were huge amount of oil reserves in Bosnia like Kuwait. Most governments of the EU, for the sake of maintaining their political power, chose to consult public opinion and did not want to risk any financial or military assets. Andreatta`s assertion (2006: 4) on this matter is that;

> "The lack of a catalyzing and compelling international threat induced democratic governments to rely heavily on public opinion. No government wanted to be blamed at elections that risked the lives of its soldiers in a contingency where no vital interests were involved without ensuring previous and undoubted public support".

The End of the Cold War was another factor for the EU's unwillingness to act, which led the members to focus on their internal problems. Therefore, most members were unwilling to take an active role in the Bosnian War, which was characterized as "a tunnel of uncertain length". Thus, they did not commit any necessary means to enforce peace.

Another explanation for the reluctance to act militarily was what Dover (2005: 308) called as "push and pull" effect provided by the Europeans adopting the idea that European Affairs should be dealt with in the European context. Accordingly, pull effect was provided by the Americans supporting the thought that they should withdraw their forces seeing that the danger of the Cold War had ended. On the other hand, the push effect was based on the idea that the EU should make its decisions outside of NATO command structures if the Union was to acquire a fully operating military capability. However, considering the mutual co-operation continuing for many years between NATO structures and at least half of the EU members on security issues, it would be really a difficult task requiring a great deal of preparatory work for the EU to operate outside of these structures. In addition, it was a well-known fact that the European military effectiveness relied heavily on the American allies. This factor also deterred the EU to plan and launch a military operation in the Bosnian crisis. Lack of political will as regards the use of military force was also confirmed by the EC mediator Lord David Owen as;

> "We were by now acutely aware of the reluctance of Defence Ministers in all NATO capitals except Ankara to take on new commitments, and I knew that there was no

> support for suggestions that our troops should have their mandate extended beyond that of escorting convoys, for example to a role in stopping ethnic cleansing" (Andreatta, P. 2006: 5).

The idea that Ankara could fulfil the military mission in stopping ethnic cleansing was not favoured due to both Russian concerns and the probable Greek veto for the matter involved. However, it is still difficult to understand why the option of air strikes was delayed for some two years to be resorted to. Lavdas (1996: 221) states that "It is questionable whether there has been any clear strategic thinking behind the use of air strikes in the Yugoslav conflict before the summer of 1995". In this respect, the failure stemming from the lack of political will about the military intervention was nothing but "political bankruptcy" of the member states within the root of the Union.

3.7. The Matter of Leadership

It is evident in the past records that the Council of Ministers was unwilling to undertake the leading role in searching for a resolution to the Bosnian conflict. Rather than conducting the international response themselves, the EU leaders preferred to underpin the American and Russian efforts. Dover (2005: 311) states that

> "The Community and its member states are in contact through the Presidency with the United States` and Russian Governments to bring pressure to bear on those responsible with a view to ending the atrocities and securing free access for international relief efforts".

In the meantime, the rotating Presidency lasting only for six months was another issue related to the matter of leadership with the result that, during the Bosnian conflict, there was naturally nobody who was systematically responsible for policy formulation.

Apart from the above-cited reasons, the financial dimension of the military intervention on the part of the EU was also another point not to be ignored at that time. Andreatte (2006: 5) states that "This was true of the financial costs, especially at a time of budget cutting and peace dividends…". In 1994, during which the Bosnian War in progress, only three members of the Union had paid their shares in the course of the completion of humanitarian aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Mostar.

Conclusion

This study focused on the international intervention during the Bosnian War, with a particular emphasis on the EU as the central actor. When the Bosnian conflict erupted in Europe, there were high expectations for the EU to play a pivotal role in ending it. However, several factors hindered the

development of a unified European approach. One significant obstacle was the differing perceptions of the crisis among leading EU countries such as France, Germany, and the UK. These countries held conflicting views on the nature of the conflict, leading to contradictions in their policies. For instance, Germany's unilateral recognition of Slovenia and Croatia and the UK's resistance to proposals like lifting the arms embargo and air strikes significantly impacted the course of the Bosnian War. This divergence not only hindered the EU's efforts but also tarnished its international reputation, ultimately eroding its credibility.

Within the context of the Bosnian War, this article has identified three major factors affecting EU strategies: the challenge of reaching a consensus, a lack of political will, and leadership issues. The absence of consensus stemmed from differing national perspectives, which prevented the rapid attainment of peace in Bosnia. France advocated for the EU's active role, while the UK believed NATO was better suited for intervention. Meanwhile, Germany refrained from debates due to domestic and constitutional constraints. The intergovernmental nature of CFSP, requiring unanimity, exacerbated this lack of consensus, allowing national policies to overshadow the European approach. A notable challenge during the Bosnian crisis was the EU's lack of political will, particularly concerning military intervention. This can be attributed to several factors, including a perception that the Balkans were a low-priority concern, the anticipation of greater pressure from the US and Russia, and a return to internal matters after the end of the Cold War. Additionally, the absence of clear national interests within the EU dampened enthusiasm for military involvement, as governments sought to align with public opinion and secure their political standing. Leadership issues and financial considerations further complicated the EU's response. No EU government wanted to take the lead in initiating action, and the rotating EU presidency hindered the continuity of crisis policies. The presence of the US and Russia as potential influencers also contributed to the EU's reluctance to assume responsibility.

The significance of the Bosnian civil war for the European Union lies behind its having potential to reveal whether the EU would take decisive measures to halt the aggressions committed by Serbs against the shared values of humanity. The crisis also underscored the potential repercussions a Balkan conflict could pose for European member states, particularly Italy and Greece. In this context, the Bosnian civil war should be viewed as the first significant trial for the EU. From a diplomatic perspective, the EU's response to the Bosnian crisis not only failed to deter or impede the progression into civil war but, in fact, hastened it. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the EU's response to a future

crisis akin to the Bosnian War, given the influence of major member states and external actors like the US and Russia. Achieving consensus among member states, possibly through structural changes to CFSP, will be as crucial as it is challenging for the EU to effectively manage future crises.

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