Decade Assignment

1990-1999

Clinton’s Administration & the Yugoslav wars,

Bill Clinton was inaugurated as the 42nd president on January 20, 1993. Upon entering office his leadership was immediately tested. Beginning with the Battle of Mogadishu, when two Black Hawk helicopters were shot down, the 90s would prove to be an unrelenting challenge of Clinton’s decisiveness. Meanwhile many other foreign events were developing. There was unrest in South Western Europe. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had just collapsed in 1991. They abandoned their communist ties and formed a new state from the republics of Montenegro and Serbia, the FRY (or Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).   
 However, the FRY was not allowed to be a part of many international institutions. This was because of the ongoing Yugoslav wars throughout the 1990s. There was also a growing separatist mentality within Serbia. And, the Yugoslavian government took the side of Croatian and Bosnian Serbs during the wars which drew on from 1991 to 1995. As a result of this the FRY was under many economical and political sanctions from the rest of the international community.

These sanctions hurt Yugoslavia, and as disaster gripped the republic thousands of youth citizens fled and immigrated to other countries. As tensions in the regions grew one key player, Slobodan Milosevic, was on a rise to power. Milosevic was President of Serbia from 1989 to 1997. Although, there were peace talks and Milosevic represented the FRY and Bosnian Serbs in Dayton Ohio, USA where the end of the war in Bosnia was negotiated giving way to the Dayton agreement.

But the climate only became harsher with growing separatism between Serbs and Albanians fighting for recognition and sanctity. In 1996 Montenegro split from Serbia economically, forming their own economic ties and now using the Deutsche Mark as its currency. Political relations grew darker with Serbia and there was a steady escalation of violence with separatist Albanians.

Milosevic’s term as Serbian president ended in 1997 and he then ran and won the office of President of Yugoslavia. Milosevic took control of the military and directed them to engage Kosovo separatists. The conflict greatly escalated as Albanians were being systematically killed by Serbs, and an ethnic cleansing began. Under these suspicions NATO forces could no longer stand idle and Operation Allied Force began. Clinton authorized the use of American resources for the Operation. The Operation was a bombing campaign targeting Yugoslav military forces and Serbian paramilitaries. But in direct response to the bombings killings of Albanians only further escalated and there were numerous massacres. Clinton and NATO agreed only to stop the bombings once Milosevic put an end to the Yugoslav campaign in Kosovo. After an array of bombings Milosevic agreed, and NATO forces occupied Yugoslavia in June 1999.

However, that was not all the foreign policy on Clinton’s mind toward the close of the decade. In his State of the Union address he warned congress of Saddam Hussein’s possible pursuit of Nuclear Weapons, which gave rise to another conflict. Clinton’s administration was even taking action against Hussein in the 1998 bombing campaign Operation Desert Fox. Ultimately, having lived during the time I see the great impact Clinton’s decisions had on other parts of the world, and can put new details to events witnessed on the news.