



HISTORICAL CRISIS COMMITTEE

Background Guide

Director: Denis Chelan

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Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Denis Chelan, and I am very excited to be serving as your Director of the Historical Crisis Committee. I've staffed a crisis committee for the past 3 years, but this will be my first time staffing HCC. When I'm not writing background guides on Eastern European wars I like to build robots, listen to music, and snowboard. Throughout my 3 years of MUN I've learned many useful skills such as public speaking and how to properly research topics. Not only that, but I've also made a lot of friends and memories that will stick with me for a long time. If you're a first time or returning delegate I hope you will want to continue MUN after this conference because it really is a unique experience.

The Historical Crisis Committee is probably my favorite because whether or not your history enthusiast like myself, it's always a good time bringing history to life. I hope you guys are ready, because HCC is an extremely fast paced committee especially when debating such a heated topic as the Yugoslav wars. After countless hours researching and writing the staff have prepared the best experience possible. We have also thrown a little twist by making each position the specific person who was in power at this time adding an extra level of depth to the debate.

With Regards,
Denis Chelan
Director, Historical Crisis Committee

~ Yugoslavia Tensions Rise ~

History

Yugoslavia first came into existence in 1918 following World War 1

It was a country uniting the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and it gained international recognition in 1922 under the rule of the Karadjordjevic royal family. In 1929, King Alexander assumed executive power, suspending the constitution, and banning national political parties. Trying to quench nationalistic passions he created a new constitution and relinquished his power in 1931 but he was later assassinated in 1934 by an expert shooter cooperating with the Croatian Fascist Revolutionary Organization. After Hitler attacked Yugoslavia in 1941, he split it into pieces. Croatia became an independent Nazi satellite state ruled by the fascist militia called Ustase, while Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy occupied other parts. After the invasion there were two resistance forces present -- the communist led Partisans, headed by Josip Broz Tito, and the Royalist Chetniks, led by Draza Mihajlovic. For the next 4 years, the Partisans led a very successful guerilla warfare campaign. Once the Axis were removed, Tito, with the support of Moscow and London, lead an independent communist state with his 800,000 strong Partisan force. After the "elections", the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was declared with Tito in full control. The new republic was modeled after the Soviet Union with six republics, an autonomous province, and an autonomous district as a part of SR Serbia with the federal capital being Belgrade. There was a focus on a strong central communist government. In 1947, after the Bled agreement Moscow and Belgrade cut ties with Yugoslavia. However, Tito remained in power and further distanced Yugoslavia from the Soviets and built his own socialist government. In 1963, the name was changed to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Tito was named President for Life. After the death of Tito in 1980, ethnic tensions grew, and the Constitution of 1974 paralyzed the government. On top of social concerns, the oil price shock started an economic crisis, resulting in over 600,000 workers laid off. In the wake of Tito's death, Slobodan Milosevic was on his way to become the Political Official of Serbia and managed to gain 4 votes out of the 8-member council in Yugoslavia. As a result, Albanians (the majority population of Kosovo), went on strike. The strikes turned into demonstrations demanding a republic. Violence broke out when the new regimes tried to replace police and military forces with secessionist forces. When Croatia tried to replace the police in Croat Kajina, a Serb populated area, the people organized armed resistance and marked the beginning of the War.

Timeline

1948-1952: Tito and Stalin break ties, prompting Yugoslavia to differentiate in the absence of Moscow's influence. This causes some fast economic and educational growth.

1968: Protests and student demonstrations break out, which Tito partially allowed. Croatian terrorists plants bombs at cinemas with several people dying.

1971: Demonstrations in Croatia, also known as Croatian Spring, were condemned by Tito and the communist government. Many of the nationalists present were convicted for hate speech.

1974: New Constitution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is written, giving more power to Kosovo and Vojvodina.

1980: Josip Broz Tito dies.

1981: The economic crisis due to oil prices starts, as well as Albanian Nationalist demonstrations in Kosovo. They are for the most part suppressed by the communist government.

1986-1989: Slobodan Milosevic rises to power in Serbia. Albanian miners strike in the Stari Trg mine with the support of the Slovenian government. As relations between Serbia and Slovenia worsen, an unofficial embargo is placed on Slovenian products.

1990: Communist Party dissolves on republic and partially on national lines, with Slovenian and Croatian communists leaving the Congress. Constitutional changes gave Serbia 3/8 votes (4/8 including Montenegro). Croatian Serbs start a rebellion against the newly elected government.

January 1991: Croatian army and war preparations are televised and negotiations between heads of the republics are unsuccessful.

March 1991: Demonstrations in Belgrade against Milosevic end in two deaths, and the army puts tanks in the streets to maintain control.

June 1991: Ethnic violence in breaks out in Croatia. Slovenia and Croatia declare independence. The People's army intervenes in Slovenia and following a 10-day war they are defeated.

July 1991: A three-month ceasefire is agreed on in Brioni. Croatia and Slovenia suspend their independence for three months.

September 1991: The People's Army attack the Croat area (Dalmatia and Slavonia), starting the Croatian War of Independence.

October 1991: The People's Army begins the siege of Dubrovnik.

December 1991: The Serbs in Croatia are proclaimed as the Republic of Serbian Krajina but remain unrecognized by any country except Serbia.

January 1992: Vance peace plan signed, creating four UNPA zones for Serb-controlled territories, and ending large scale military operations in Croatia. Macedonia declares independence. Slovenia and Croatia are internationally recognized (European Community countries, several EFTA and Central European countries).

February-March 1992:

The Carrington-Cutileiro peace plan is created at the EC Peace Conference. The conference is held in February 1992, in an attempt to prevent Bosnia-Herzegovina sliding into war. It proposed ethnic power-sharing on all administrative levels and the devolution of central government to local ethnic communities. However, all Bosnia-Herzegovina's districts would be classified as Muslim, Serb, or Croat under the plan, even where no ethnic majority was evident.

March 18, 1992: All three sides sign the agreement; Alija Izetbegović for the Bosniaks, Radovan Karadžić for the Serbs, and Mate Boban for the Croats.

March 28, 1992: Despite having signed the agreement, Alija Izetbegović withdrew his signature and declared his opposition to any type of partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

April 1992

Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence. Bosnian War begins.

The siege of Sarajevo begins. Bosnian Serb forces mounted the siege of Sarajevo resulting in 10,000 killed by 1995.

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia proclaimed, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro, the only two remaining republics.

May 1992

Yugoslav army retreats from Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving a large part of its armory to Bosnian Serbs. Military personnel who were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina retain ranks in the newly founded VRS.

United Nations impose sanctions against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and accepts Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina as members.

Summer 1992

Bosnian Serbs gain control of 70% of territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hundreds of thousands of refugees result from the war, and large portions of Bosnia and Herzegovina are ethnically cleansed of non-Serbs.

October 2, 1992: Current Day

Current Situation

Following the death of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito in 1980, underlying political, ethnic, religious, and economic tensions resurfaced in the country as nationalism among the six republics rose.

In 1989 Slobodan Milošević, Chairman of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia since 1986, became president of Serbia, the largest and most populous of the Yugoslav republics, and quickly moved to consolidate power by centralizing Yugoslavia. The governments of the other republics responded by devolving as much constitutional power as possible to each of the republics and autonomous provinces. A series of disagreements among delegates persisted until four of the six republics made the decision to secede from Yugoslavia.

Supported by Germany and the Vatican, Slovenia was among those republics aiming for independence. In April 1990, Slovenia held its first democratic multi-party elections, won by the DEMOS coalition, a nationalistic party. Through DEMOS, on 23 December 1990, Slovenia held a referendum on their independence, which passed with 88.5% of the overall electorate supporting independence, and a turnout of 93.3%.

Immediately after the Slovenian elections, the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) announced a new defense doctrine that would apply across the country. Each republic's Territorial Defense Force (*Teritorialna obramba*, or TO), was to be replaced by a centrally directed system of defense. The republics would lose their role in defense matters, and their TOs would be disarmed and subordinated to YPA headquarters in Belgrade, Serbia.

The Slovenian government resisted these moves and successfully ensured that the majority of Slovenian Territorial Defense (TO) equipment was kept out of the hands of the YPA. It also declared in a constitutional amendment passed on 28 September 1990 that its TO would be under the sole command of the Slovenian government. At the same time, the Slovenian government set up a secret alternative command structure, known as the Manoeuvre Structures of National Protection (MSNZ). This was an institution unique to Slovenia, intended to enable the republic to form an *ad hoc* defense structure, akin to a Home Guard. The DEMOS-led government realized that the MSNZ could be adapted to provide a parallel organization to the TO that would be entirely in the hands of the Slovenian government.

Slovenia and Croatia passed the acts about their independence on 25 June 1991. This breakup of Yugoslavia accompanied the disintegration of the Soviet Union completed by the end of 1991. From this point, the governments of the area must work to negotiate the fraught situation they have come into.