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## About the Terms "Yugoslavia" "Balkanization" and "Third Balkan War"

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### Abstract

This paper deals with the terms "Yugoslavia", "Balkanization" and "Third Balkan War" in correlation with the Yugoslav wars and their character. The general aim of the paper is to make an attempt to analyze and explain these terms in historical and present patterns and see if they are applicable in the former Yugoslavia context.

**Keywords:** Yugoslavia; Yugoslav wars; Balkanization; Third Balkan War;

### 1. Introduction

The state of Yugoslavian was created right after the First World War and was officially named as Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. After the World War II; this state transformed into a federal republic. So, the name "Yugoslavia" became part of its official name. Despite the fact all the Yugoslav peoples have lived together in peace for nearly half a century during the second Yugoslavia the federation dissipated in bloody civil war. In this respect the paper treats the terms "Yugoslavia", "Balkanization" and "Third Balkan War" in attempt to analyze and explain them in historical and present patterns.

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## 2. The term “Yugoslavia”

We can say that the term “Yugoslavia” comes from the predominant structure of the population that constituted this country on the Balkan Peninsula.

We are talking about the southern Slavic people, hence the term “South Slavia” or the country of the southern Slavs. The idea of creating a common state of all the southern Slavs existed long before the creation of the state of Yugoslavia. According to Sperber [1] this idea was imbued in the ideas of certain circles that were conspiring unification of the south Slavs, particularly in the early 19th century when there was a national awakening of the Slavs within the Austro-Hungarian imperia. The idea for establishing a state of the southern Slavs in combination with certain favorable historical - political conditions resulted with creating a state named Yugoslavia. Specifically, we can speak about three successive political entities known as Yugoslavia which were different by its characteristics and had different internal political order.

First Yugoslavia was established on 1 December 1918 with the unification of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs with the Kingdom of Serbia. The State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was formed in the southern parts of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy at the end of the World War I on 29 October 1918, inhabited predominantly by Slavic population (Slovenes, Croats and Serbs). During its short existence, this country has not won international recognition. The Kingdom of Serbia on the other hand, was an internationally recognized state which included the territories of Serbia, with Kosovo, Vojvodina, Vardar Macedonia and Montenegro. The new state has obtained an international recognition in 1922 under the official name – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes or shortly – SHS Kingdom (abbreviation on its original full notion – Srbija, Hratska, Slovenija). However, the name “Versailles state” was also used as an unofficial name for the country. Despite this the name – “Yugoslavia” was the most frequently used as an unofficial name. So, firstly, Yugoslavia was created as a kingdom in which the constituent nations were only the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In the 1920s the informal name has become an official name the country which has been renamed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The end of the kingdom came with the Second World War and the occupation of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Nazi Germany in 1944. Events during the Second World War brought division within Yugoslavia itself on ethnic grounds mostly between Croats and Serbs. However, *“the first Yugoslavia was not an unmitigated disaster doomed to end in the slaughter of the Second World War that it did has more to do with foreign intervention and the exceptional circumstances of 1941 than any innate desire of Serbs and Croats to wipe each other out”* [2] We agree with his assertion that the violence that occurred between the two largest Yugoslav nations during the Second World War was due more to the specific historical conditions rather than a huge intolerance between these two nations. However this is an issue that should be dealt by the history.

The “second Yugoslavia” was created during the World War II by the Yugoslav partisans who fought for the liberation of occupied Yugoslavia. This event occurred on 29 November 1943 in the town of Jajce in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which at that time was free territory controlled by the Yugoslav partisans. Democratic Federal Yugoslavia has been chosen as an official name of the new state. The Yugoslav partisan leader Josip Broz Tito, in very complicated conditions, despite the opposition coming from the former royalist government that at the time was in exile in Britain, managed to impose itself as alone and internationally recognized leader and for life

president. As from the formal creating of the first communist government in 1946, the official name of the state was changed one more time into Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Later on there was another change in its official name into a Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or shortly SFRY. This was the official name until the end of the state in the early 1990s. This "second Yugoslavia" was a federally edited state. It consisted of six republics. These were SR (Socialist Republic) of Slovenia, SR of Croatia, SR of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SR of Serbia, SR of Montenegro and SR of Macedonia. Besides the republics, two autonomous provinces within Serbia - Socialist Autonomous Province (SAP) of Kosovo and SAP of Vojvodina were part of the federation too. *"This division into federal units was not meant to divide the country but to create equitable a balance as possible between the Yugoslavia's peoples and to prevent conflict over disputed territories. Borders between republics were drawn up on a mixture of ethnic and historical principles. In this way, Macedonians won recognition of their separate national identity and their own republic. Montenegro, too become a Republic in its own right in respect of its independent history, while Bosnia - Herzegovina maintained its former Ottoman contours including a segment on the Adriatic coast. The border between Croatia and Vojvodina meandered between villages depending on whether they had a Croat or a Serb majority. Kosovo became an autonomous region and Vojvodina an autonomous province within Serbia because of the large non - Serbian population living there."* [2] However, some possible territorial disputes were not treated or were treated but eventually put aside, *"the issue of autonomy of the predominantly Serb regions of Croatia was considered but eventually set aside. Presumably, had autonomy been granted to these regions, then the same status would have had to be accorded to the predominantly Muslim Sandžak in Serbia (...)* But autonomy, even limited cultural autonomy, was deemed unnecessary because, as far as Yugoslavia's communists were concerned, the end of capitalism meant the end of national oppression" [2] Although apparently complicated but good structure and organization of Yugoslavia manage to provide life living in peace nearly half a century. Still the events in the early 1990s showed that not all the problems were solved by the manner how Yugoslavia was organized. That same country ceased to exist with the launch of the Yugoslav wars in the early 1990s that led to independence and numerous territorial disputes between the former federal republics and provinces.

The "third Yugoslavia" was launched on 27 March 1992 under the name "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" or in abbreviation FRY. FRY was composed of the two remaining non-secessionist republics of Serbia and Montenegro together with the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina as a part of Serbia. The "third Yugoslavia" was a federal country which, at least formally, had a democratic form of governing. On 04 February 2003 the official name of the country was one again changed, but for the first time since the foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes encounter a name that in itself does not contain the word "Yugoslavia". Therefore the new official name is "The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro". Yet the international community unofficially continues to refer to it as Yugoslavia.

The end of this last Yugoslav state happened in June 2006 with the Montenegro's independence declaration. With this the last Yugoslav dissolution between the former federal republics happened.

Unfortunately the end of Yugoslavia was quite bloody and marked by the Yugoslav wars. The Yugoslav name continued to live in unofficial use. For example, the terms ex - Yu (former Yugoslav) states or ex - Yu music continue to exist. The only official use of the name "Yugoslavia" remained in the temporary reference "Former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” under which the Republic of Macedonia was officially admitted to the Organization of the United Nations after the strong pressure made by Greece despite the international public law and the basic human rights.

### **3. The use of the terms “Balkanization” and “Third Balkan War”**

The breakup of Yugoslavia could be freely put in the context of the term “Balkanization”. *“Balkanization is division of a multinational state into smaller ethnically homogeneous entities”* [3]. The term was originally used to denote the process of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkans and the creation of smaller states. So this is a process that consisted of splitting the bigger state in to smaller ones. This process began in 1817 with the creation of Serbia (and its liberations from the Ottoman Empire) and continued with the creation of independent countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, and Albania...Balkanization continued through the breakup of Yugoslavia in 5 countries, the dissolution of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro and the proclamation of Kosovo as an independent state. Therefore, we can say that the dissolution of Yugoslavia is definitely within the context of the term “Balkanization”.

It is indisputable that the Yugoslav wars were part of a series of big Balkan wars. However, some authors go one step further. Their view rests in the fact that historically the Balkans had led two major wars between the Balkan states. So according to this logic, the Yugoslav wars were once again a big war that was conducted between the Balkan states. According to this they can be classified as “Third Balkan War”. In order to see the correctness for the use of this term we should do a short historical review. The first Balkan War was on from October 1912 till May 1913. One of the opponent sides was the Balkan league composed of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire on the other side. The second Balkan War was from June 1913 until August in that same year. The states - participants in the second Balkan war were: Bulgaria from one side and Serbia and Greece on the other side, but a little later Romania and the Ottoman Empire joined too. This historical overview is enough to conclude that the use of the term “Third Balkan War” as a synonym for the Yugoslav wars, is not justified, neither in the context of the territories where the wars were conducted nor in the context of state which fights the opponent. Thus, during both Balkan wars, the war took place mostly in the territory of Macedonia and Thrace, while the Yugoslav wars were fought mainly in the territory of Croatia and B&H (Bosnia and Herzegovina). While, out of the group of countries that were involved in the first and second Balkan war, only Serbia and Montenegro participated in the Yugoslav wars.

### **4. Yugoslav wars and their character**

Sometimes there is confusion about the term “Yugoslav wars”. It should be clear on exactly what it is referred to when using this term and furthermore which wars can be considered as Yugoslav ones? Whether they were civil wars or were state wars is also question that must be considered. In regard to the question which wars can be consider as Yugoslav, the literature generally provides two views. Some authors believe the term, “Yugoslav wars” includes the armed conflicts that occurred at the beginning of 90s in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. a series of armed conflicts that occurred during the period from 1991 to 1995 on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, among Slovenes and YNA (Yugoslav People’s Army), Serbs (and Montenegrins to a

lesser extent) on the one hand and Croats and Bosnians on the other side, but also between Bosnians and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At these positions is Hoare [4] according to him the term war of Yugoslav secession refers to the armed conflicts from 1991 to 1995. On the other hand for some other authors [5] the term “Yugoslav wars” is much more comprehensive and it covers not only the armed conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia in the period 1991 until 1995 but also includes the armed conflicts that have occurred in Kosovo and Macedonia 1998/99 and 2001 i.e. suggest that the term “Yugoslav wars” should include the series of armed conflicts that occurred between 1991 until 2001 on the territory of former Yugoslavia between the Serbs (and Montenegrins to a lesser extent) on one side and Croats, Bosnians, Albanians (Kosovars) (and Slovenes and to a lesser extent) on the other side, but also between the Bosnians and Croats in B&H and the conflict between Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia. Both views have their arguments and its supporters.

As of our opinion, the term “Yugoslav wars” should be used only in its narrowed meaning that only includes the series of armed conflicts that occurred on the territory of former Yugoslavia, i.e. Slovenia, Croatia and B&H. Using the previous term in its extensive meaning which includes the military conflicts that have occurred in Kosovo and Macedonia, would not be a proper for the simple reason that at the time of their occurrence SFR Yugoslavia no longer existed and therefore we cannot talk about Yugoslav wars. At the same time, it must be emphasized that one cannot completely ignore that fact of those who claim that the root of these conflicts (especially Kosovo) lies from the time of the existence of Yugoslavia, and therefore, in its content all these conflicts are part of the Yugoslav wars. However, the arguments for the former belonging to the same state and a reference to this reason – casual relation are not strong enough to qualify these conflicts as Yugoslavs. This is so because if we follow that line of thinking any eventual future armed conflict on the territory of former Yugoslavia should automatically be seen as part of the Yugoslav wars, although now each of the former federal republics is an independent and internationally recognized state. Perhaps the simplest solution would be use of the term “war of Yugoslav succession” [4]. This term clarifies which Yugoslav wars we are talking about. These are the wars or the war that did the collapse in SFR Yugoslavia. Respectively the term *‘war of Yugoslav secession’* refers to the fact that the war was fought to determine the new political and territorial order to succeed the moribund SFRJ.(...) Although subsequent armed conflicts were fought between Serbian security forces and Kosovo Albanian rebels - in 1996/9, between Serbian forces and NATO in 1999 and between Macedonian security forces and Macedonian Albanian rebels in 2001, these were distinct from the war of Yugoslav Succession proper” [4].

The answer of the question about the character of the Yugoslav wars, i.e. whether they can be qualified as civil wars or if they were interstate war, is quite complicated. Almost each of the parties - participants in the Yugoslav wars has its own view of what was happening on the battlefield.

The war in Slovenia is often called the ten-day war because this war lasted about 10 days. It was a brief military conflict between the territorial defense of Slovenia and the Yugoslav People’s Army – YNA, conducted on the territory of the former SR of Slovenia. This military conflict erupted with the Slovenian declaration of independence. Slovenians consider this war as interstate war or a clear case of aggression by the Yugoslav army on their state.

The war in Croatia lasted from 1991 until 1995. The Croats called it the "Homeland War". Again most of the Croats consider this war as aggression by Serbia on their territory, unlike Serbia that characterizes this war as civil conflict.

The war in B&H lasted from 1992 to 1995. All three sides of participants have different interpretations about the nature of this war. The Muslims do not consider it as a civil war but as an act of an aggression by Croatia and Serbia (Yugoslavia) on B&H. Serbs consider this war as a civil war. Croats believe that this war was a combination of both. So according to them there was a Serbian aggression on B&H from one hand and a civil war inside B&H on the other hand. But, what the literature says about this? According to Fearon [6] civil war is a violent conflict within the country led by an organized group with a goal for gaining control in one center or a region or a change of a government policies. So the Yugoslav wars can be put under the category of civil wars. All those wars were fought inside Yugoslavia (at least until the individual republics gained international recognition for their independence) and aimed to gaining control in certain republics or regions. Another question is when is the moment when the civil unrest transforms into a civil war? As horrible as it seems, yet in most of the literature it is determined that the number of victims is taken as a unit of measurement. Thus, according to Fearon [6] unit of measure by which certain civil unrest become real civil war is by reaching a number of casualties higher than 1000, regardless on which side there are. The same problem also occupied Wong [7] which generally agrees with the previous author but also gives his own additional element. Namely, he considers that it is not enough to have at least 1000 victims to call it a civil war, but there is also a further condition that requires victims from the both sides with at least 100 casualties on both sides. These conditions have not been fulfilled only in the case of Slovenian war of ten days, but the war in Croatia, according to some estimates have taken over 20,000 lives on both sides. The war in B&H resulted in far greater number of casualties [8] around 100,000. So the last two wars met these conditions and can be considered as civil wars. However, if we make an analysis of the judgments of the International Tribunal [9] for crimes committed on former Yugoslavia, than it could be seen that in many of its judgments is clearly said that parties involved the war in B&H were actually the FR of Yugoslavia and Croatia. So this is a kind of claim that declares war in B&H as an interstate war.

Despite the existence of different views we believe that the Yugoslav wars began and were civil wars within the SFRY, until the particular republics gained international recognition of their independence and after this moment the further duration of the war had an interstate war character.

## **5. Conclusion**

The term "Yugoslavia" was not used as official name of the Kingdom of SHS. However the Kingdom was very often unofficially reffered simply as "Yugoslavia". This word became part of the official name of the country after the World War I. Today after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, this word again being used only in unofficial communication. As for the term "Balkanization" we can say that the events during the dissolution of Yugoslavia could be freely put in the context of this term. Contrary to this, the term "Third Balkan War" is not fully applicable for the Yugoslav wars.

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