

# NATIONS IN CONFLICT

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**Session 8: The Balkan Wars**



# On The Agenda For Today

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- **The Balkans Before Yugoslavia**
  - Historical Background
  - The Treaty of Berlin (1878)
  - 19<sup>th</sup> Century Nationalism
  - The Balkan Wars (1912-1913)
  - The Balkans in the 1920s'
- **Yugoslavia: Ethnic Relations in a Centralised State**
  - Yugoslavia During WW2
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- **The Collapse of Yugoslavia**
  - Increasing Tensions
  - Separation of Ethnic Groups
  - Yugoslavia 3.0
- **Bosnia Herzegovina**
- **The Kosovo Conflict**
- **Contemporary Developments**
- **Analysis, Conclusions**



# The Balkans: Introduction

- **‘Balkans’**- ‘mountains’ in Turkish
- **No universal agreement** on the regions’ components
- **Varied Definitions:** Cultural, historical, geographical
- **Ethnic Diversity**

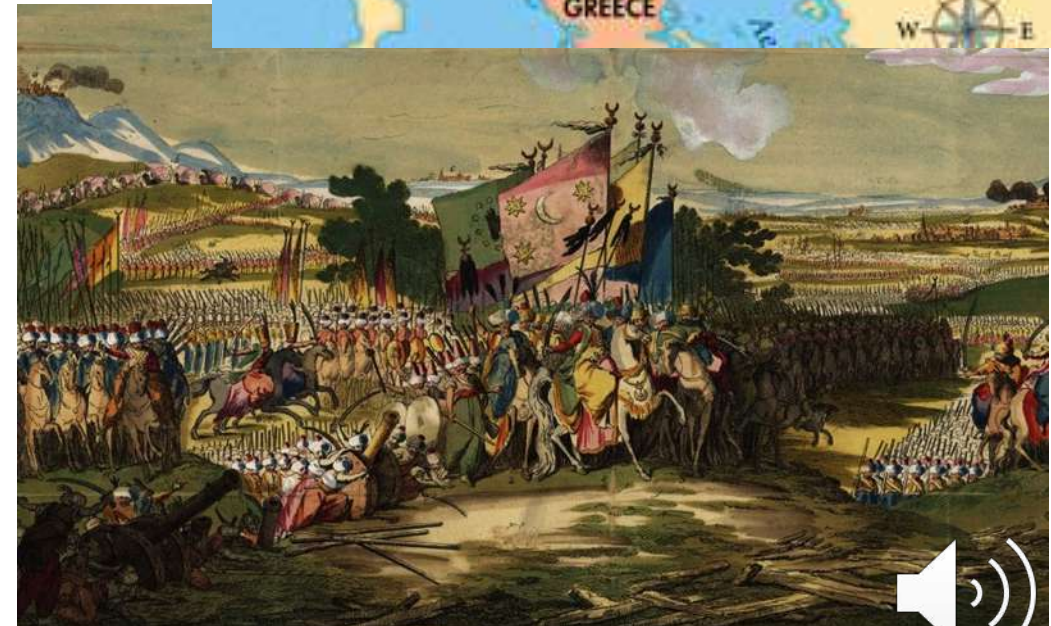




# The Balkan Peninsula < 1878

## Historical Background =>

- Renewed **Hapsburg-Ottoman fighting**
- The Austrian '**Militärgrenze**' (Military Frontier)
- **Failed Serbian uprising:**
  - **Serbian uprisings (1804-1813)**, revolt seeking self determination after over 300 years under Ottoman rule



Austro-Turkish War (1788–1791)



# The Balkan Peninsula < 1878

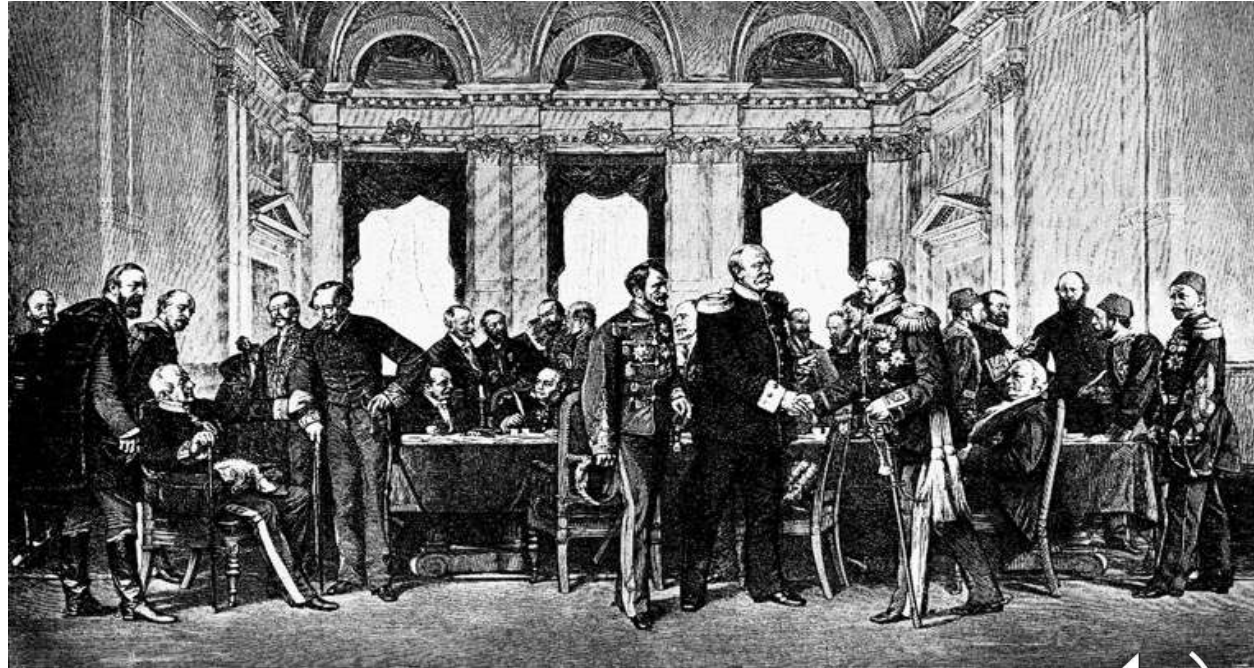
- **The ethnic composition** of the Balkans **changed** throughout the **18<sup>th</sup> century**
- Steady decline of the Ottoman Empire
- Two major **redefinition** of **political boundaries** in the Balkans:
  - The **Treaty of San Stefano** (March 1878)
  - The **Treaty of Berlin** (June 1878)



# The Balkan Peninsula < 1878

## The Treaty of Berlin (1878)

- **Bulgaria** was split to three: **Bulgaria, Eastern Rumelia, Macedonia (Ottoman)**
- **Romania- independent**
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** occupied by **Austria-Hungary**
- **Serbia and Montenegro** lost territories and became **isolated** from each other
- No consideration of the **aspirations** of the Balkan peoples themselves



# Forming Nation States

## 19th century Nationalism in the Balkans =>

- The creation of **nation-states** on former Ottoman territory
- Occurred when the region's **Christian population** induced **foreign intervention** to secure its **separation** from **Ottoman power**
- While **each nation evolved in a unique way, two common characteristics were:**
  - The formation of **national movements** (mostly in an armed struggle against a ruler/foreign expansionist nationalism)
  - **Dominant external factors**





# Forming Nation States

## 19th century Nationalism in the Balkans =>

- Independent states: **Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro**
  - **Bulgaria** united with Eastern Rumelia (1885), fully independent in 1908
- **Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina** ruled by **Austria-Hungary**
- Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: The **Ottoman Empire** was **crumbling**
  - **Nationalism wave** in the Balkans



# The Balkans Before WWI

## The Balkan Wars (1912 - 1913) =>

- **The First Balkan War (1912)** fought between the members of the Balkan League and the Ottoman Empire
  - **Balkan Victory**
  - **Ottoman Empire lost Macedonia and Albania**
  - **Albania became independent, Macedonia was divided** among the Balkan allies



# The Balkans Before WWI

## The Balkan Wars (1912 - 1913) =>

- **The Second Balkan War (1913)**, fought between Serbia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria over Macedonia
  - **Bulgaria lost**
  - **Greece and Serbia divided** most of Macedonia between themselves
- 28 June 1914: **Franz Ferdinand assassinated** by a Bosnian Serb Yugoslav nationalist => **WWI**



# The Balkans: 1920's

- 1918 => **End of WWI**, Austria-Hungary and Russian Empire **collapsed**
  - The fate of their Balkan territories was decided at the **Paris Peace Conference** (1919-1920): Formation of **Yugoslavia**
  - **Ethnic kaleidoscope**: Settlements did not completely follow ethnic lines of division, but-
    - **Impossible** task to begin with
    - **Larger states** would be more **economically viable** than smaller, more ethnically homogeneous ones
    - **Larger states** would be more **effective barriers against** Russian + Hungarian **bolshevism**



# Yugoslavia



- Land of the South Slavs
- 1. The '**Kingdom of Yugoslavia**' (1929-WW2)
- 2. Postwar **Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** (Yugoslavia 2.0)
  - Serbia & Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Slovenia
- 3. **Yugoslavia 3.0** (1992-2003/6)
  - 45% of the population + 40% of the territory of its predecessor
  - New name: **Serbia and Montenegro**



# Yugoslavia 1.0

- Created in the **Paris Peace Conference**, post WWI
- The **Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes** comprised the former kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro (including Serbian-held Macedonia), Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Unitary, highly centralized, Serb dominated state
  - Turned into a **royal dictatorship** named '**Yugoslavia**' in 1929
- Deep **regional disparities** in standard of living
- **Ended with the outbreak of WWII (1941)**



# Yugoslavia: Ethnic Groups

- **Religious Diversity:**
  - Serbian Orthodox Church
  - Croatian Catholic Church
  - Islam + Heretical tradition in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Ethnic groups were dissatisfied with their status** in the new state
  - **Opposed the domination** of one ethnic group and called for greater **national & political rights**

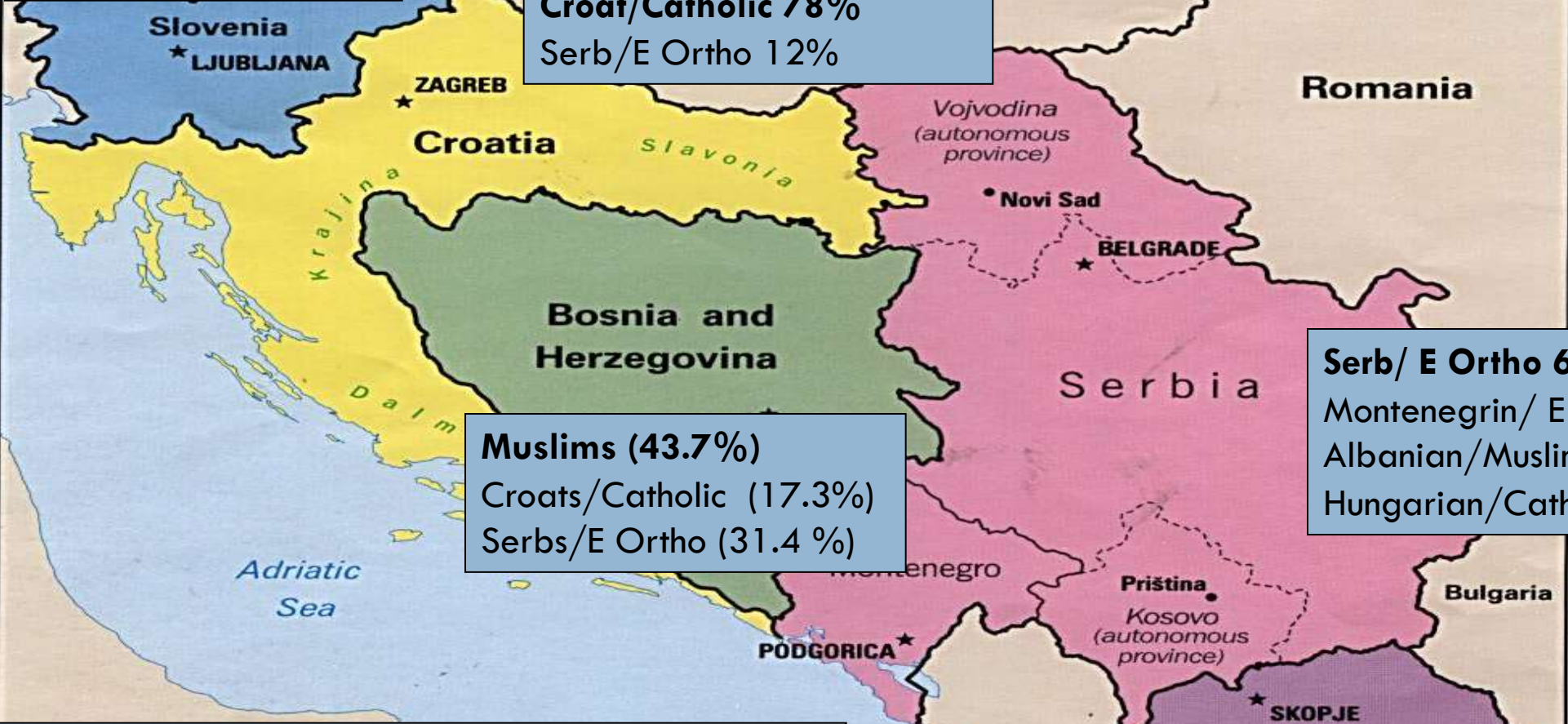


Ethnic Groups in Yugoslavia

**Slovene/Catholic 91%**  
Croat/Catholic 3%  
Serb/E Ortho 2%

**Croat/Catholic 78%**  
Serb/E Ortho 12%

Serbia and Montenegro have asserted the formation of a joint independent state, but this entity has not been formally recognized as a state by the United States. Macedonia has proclaimed independent statehood but has not been formally recognized as a state by the United States.



**Muslims (43.7%)**  
Croats/Catholic (17.3%)  
Serbs/E Ortho (31.4 %)

**Serb/ E Ortho 63%**  
Montenegrin/ E Ortho 6%  
Albanian/Muslim 14%  
Hungarian/Catholic 4%

**Patterns of Ethnic Settlement  
Facilitated the Conflict and  
Break-up**

**66% Macedonian/E Ortho**  
23% Albanian/Muslim  
2% Serb/E Ortho  
4% Turk/Muslim





# Yugoslavia 1.0

- Not only that people were divided by religion and had distinct national aspiration,
- **Discrepant Visions for Yugoslavia =>**
  - **Fascists:** Strong central government headed by a dictator
  - **Communists:** Goods + services should be owned & distributed among the people
- **Economic Problems** due to diverse origins



# Yugoslavia During WWII

## Yugoslavia's Agony in the Second World War =>

- April **1941**: German & Italian armies **conquered Yugoslavia**
  - **Croatia**: Independent **puppet state** (included Bosnia)
  - **Serbia**: Controlled by Germans
  - **Montenegro**: Occupied by Italy
  - **Kosovo**: Occupied by **Albanian** and **Italian forces**
  - **Bulgarians** invaded **Macedonia**
- **Communist** partisan + **Serb nationalist** groups fought the **Germans** and **each other**



# Yugoslavia During WWII

- **The Chetnik** (*Yugoslav Army in the Homeland/ Ravna Gora Movement*) was a **Yugoslav royalist & Serbian nationalist movement** in occupied Yugoslavia
  - Led by Draža **Mihailović**
  - Fought the Germans, but more often the **Ustasha, the Communists + Bosnian Muslims**
- Croatian fascists in the **Ustasha Party** collaborated with the Germans, **ethnic cleansing of Serbs in Croatia**



# Yugoslavia 2.0



- Created in **1946** after the country was liberated from German rule by **communists**
- A **federation of six republics**: Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia
  - Over twenty ethnic groups
- **Centralized communist state** => Loosely coordinated union
- Good relations with **the west** + economic **stability**



# Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980)

- **First Yugoslavian President**
- **The Communist kept ethnic hatreds in Yugoslavia from boiling over into hostilities**
- **Propagated a “Yugoslav” identity (failed)**
- **Failed to reduce prosperity gap between north & south**
- **1974: Granted autonomy to Vojvodina & Kosovo**



# Increasing Tensions

- **Tito's death gave rise to ethnic tensions**
- **1987: Milosevic**, head of the **Serb Communist Party**, establishes a Serbian nationalist movement
- The **collapse of the Soviet Union** + its satellite regimes weakened the forces that held modern Balkans together
- **Dominant force** in the Balkans: Communism  
=> **Nationalism**



# Separation of Ethnic Groups

- **1990-1991** => Surge in violence by Serbs against non-Serbs in mixed areas of Croatia
- Milosevic: *'Yugoslavia does not exist anymore'*
- 1991 => **Yugoslavs army** begins **ethnic cleansing** of non-Serbs from "Greater Serbia"
  - Sham election in **Croatia, union with Serbia**
  - Independence referendum in **Croatia**
- June 1991 => **Slovenia, Croatia** exited the federation



Red: Serb occupied and ethnically cleansed of non-Serbs areas of **Croatia** 1991 – 1995

# Yugoslavia 3.0



- **Serbia** tried to **dominant** the region
  - Croatian War of Independence (1991-5)
  - Muslim/Croat coalition vs. Serb forces (1992-3)
  - Muslim-Croat + intra-Muslim wars (1993-4)
  - Muslim/Croat, Muslim/Croat/NATO joint offensive vs. Serb forces (March-October 1995)
- 1992 => A **new federation** of **Serbia** and **Montenegro** (during the Yugoslavian civil war, Yugoslavia 3.0)
  - **Bosnia & Herzegovina** + **Macedonia** declare **independence**, fighting spread





# Separation of Ethnic Groups

## Response of the International Community =>

- In 1992, UN brokered ceasefire between Serbs and Croats in Croatia
  - The **United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR)** is created to monitor the Serb-Croat cease-fire
  - First UN peacekeeping force in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Yugoslav Wars



# Bosnia Herzegovina



- **Multi-ethnic Society:** Muslims, Serbs, Croats
- **Bosnian Serbs seek autonomy + expansionism**
- **1992: Bosnia Herzegovina breaks out of Yugoslavia**
  - **Bosnian Serb attack, Muslims forced to flee**

- **1993: Serb forces control around 70% of Bosnia**
- **Ethnic Cleansing of Muslims & Croats by Bosnian Serbs**



# Bosnia Herzegovina



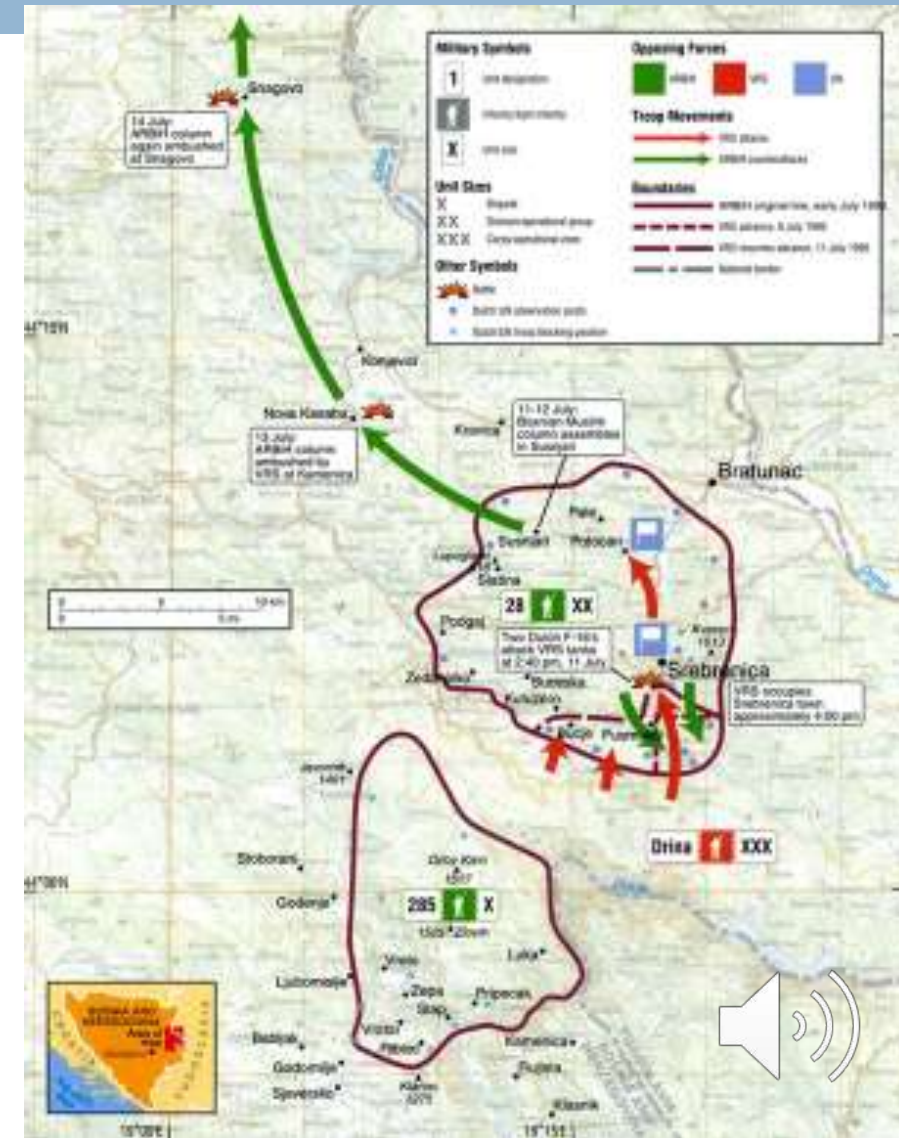
## Areas of control in Bosnia Herzegovina, September 1994

- Mainly controlled by the **Bosnian Serb Army** and the Army of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Croats military forces** were also present



# The Srebrenica Massacre

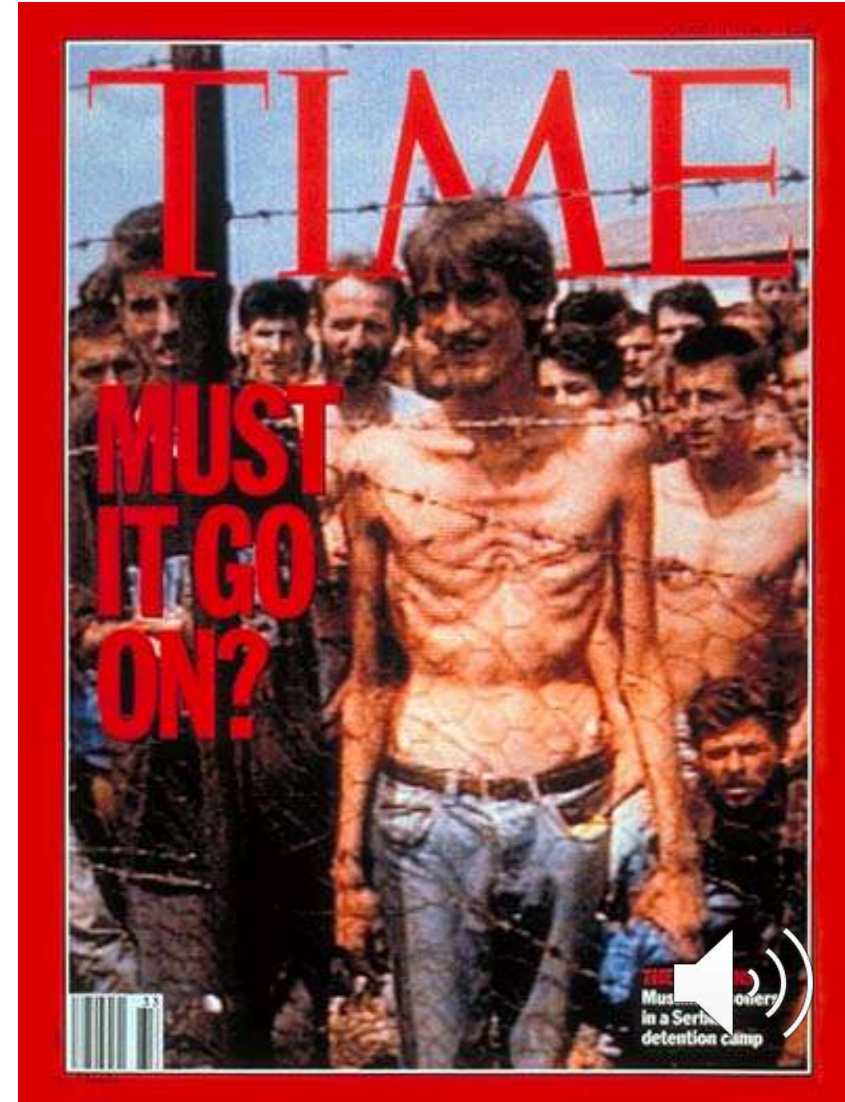
- June 1995 => **The Srebrenica Massacre/genocide**
  - Eastern Bosnia conquered by Bosnian Serb & Serbian army forces**
  - Was supposed to be a **safe zone**
- Killing of over 7,000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslims) killed in/around Srebrenica, perpetrated by the Bosnian Serb Army**
  - Mass expulsion of Bosniak civilians**



# Separation of Ethnic Groups

## Response of the International Community =>

- Mass killings, concentrations camps, destruction of mosques **reported worldwide**
    - UN placed **economic sanctions on Serbia, didn't send a fighting force**
  - Agreement to stop attacking Muslims was broken when Serbs attacked "**safe havens**" in Bosnia
    - 1995: **Bosnian Serbs reject peace proposals**  
=> months of **NATO air strike + ground attack**
- **Dayton Agreement**





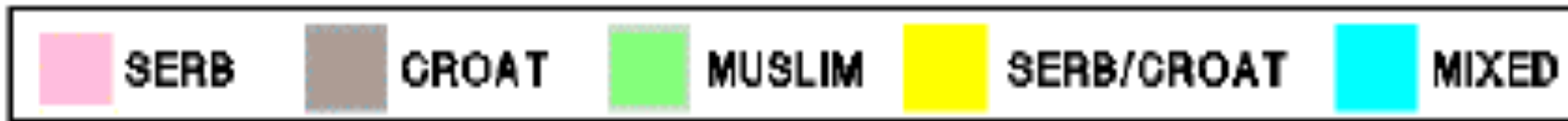
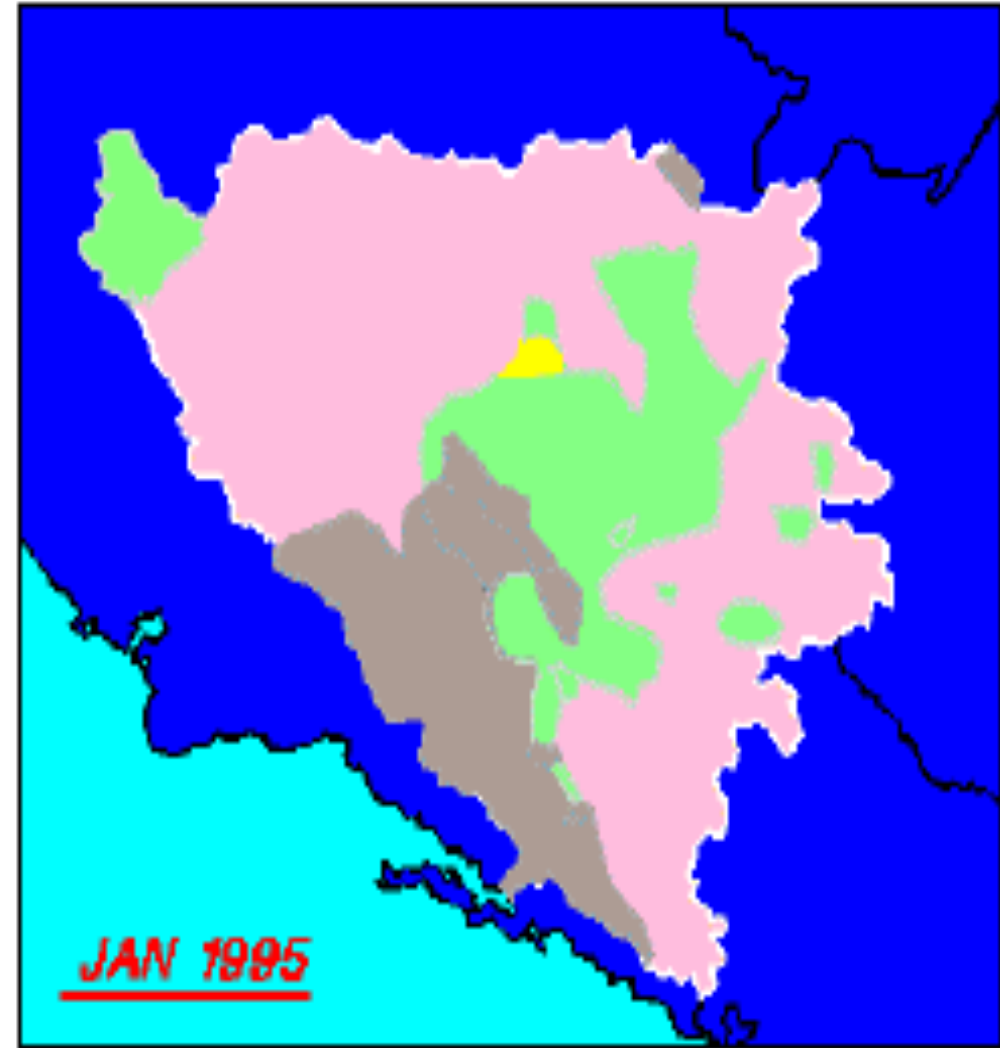
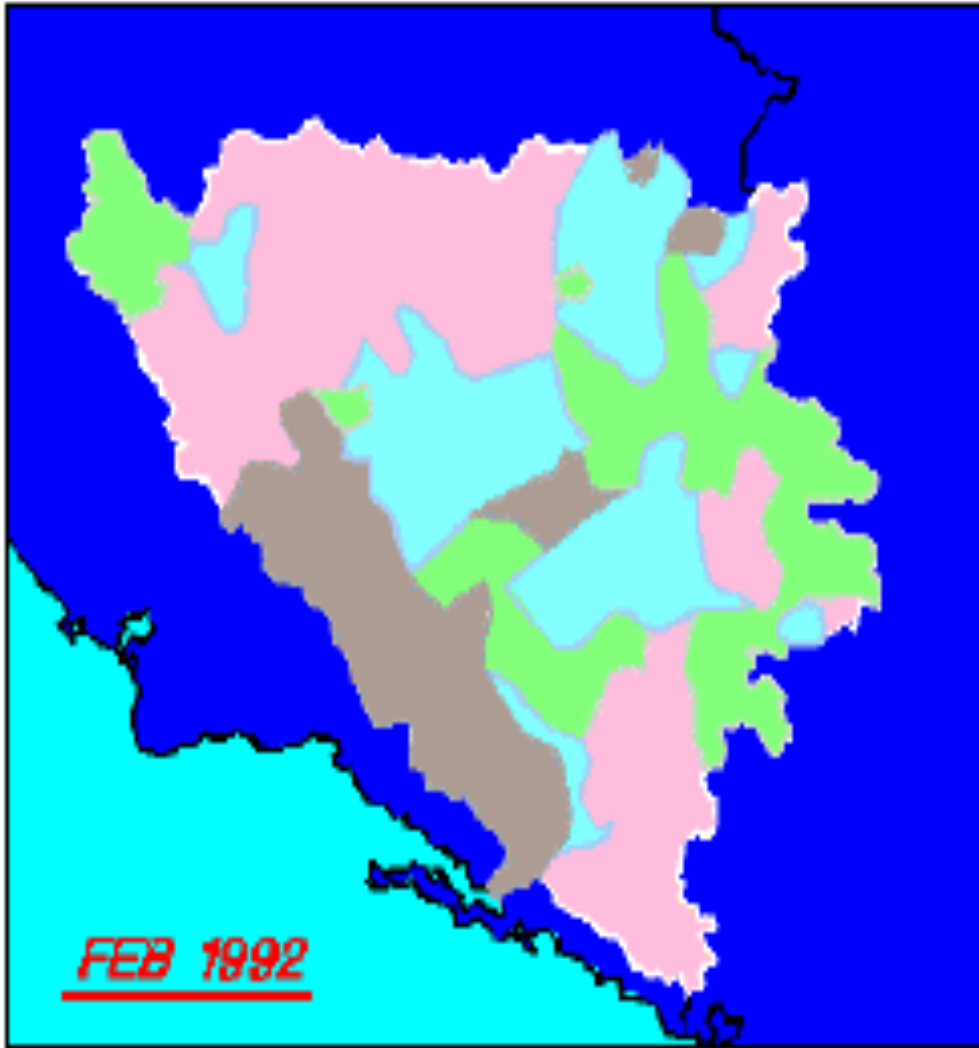
# The Dayton Agreement

- November 1995 => **Dayton agreement (Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia)**
  - Ending the war in Bosnia
  - Preserved Bosnia as a single state, made up of two parts: **Bosniak-Croat federation + Bosnian Serb Republic**
  - **Sarajevo**: Undivided capital
- A **NATO-led peacekeeping force** was created to supervise implementing the military aspects of the agreement



Before the War

After Dayton Accords





# The Kosovo Conflict (1998)

- The **Kosovo Liberation Army** (supported by a majority ethnic Albanians) started a **rebellion against the Serbian rule**, seeking **independence => Civil War**
- **Forced expulsions of Albanian refugees by Serb forces**
- **International pressure** on Serbian **Milosevic** to end the escalating violence in the province **failed**
- **Major Serbian military** offensive against the Kosovo Liberation Army led to **NATO's intervention**



# The Kosovo Conflict (1998)



# The Kosovo Conflict (1998)

- 1999 => **NATO air strikes** against Serbia (March- June)
  - Focused on **military targets in Kosovo and Serbia**
  - Destroyed the defense ministry and the Chinese embassy in Belgrade
  - US Marines and KFOR occupied Kosovo
- **Peace Accords** (summer of 1999)
  - Union is maintained + greater autonomy
- 2003: Renamed '**Serbia and Montenegro**'



Serbia and Montenegro, 2000

# Contemporary Developments

- By 2003, **Serbia and Montenegro** were all that's left from Yugoslavia
- 2006 => **Montenegro** separated from Serbia and gained **independence following a close referendum**
- 2008 => **Kosovo** declares its independence
  - Only recognized by the countries in green





# Contemporary Developments

- 2019: Former Yugoslav Republic of **Macedonia** => **North Macedonia**
  - **The Prespa Agreement (2018)**



# Analysis

- The volatility of the '**Balkan Powder keg**' =>
  - Dispute over **resources**
  - **Ancient hatred**
  - **Meddling by Great Powers**
  - **Terrain**
  - **Religious diversity**



# Analysis

- What can account for the volatility of the '**Balkan Powder keg**' ?
- **Ethnic Diversity => Ethno-nationalism => Identity Politics**





# Conclusions

- The Balkans: Arena of **conflicting identities** and **clashing political goals**
- Two World Wars created + revised political borders irrespective to ethnic population disparity
- The **communist state** 'kept the lid' on the Balkan's pressure cooker of ethnicities
- Post Cold War + collapse of communism
- **Division along ethnic lines** (not religious, skin color, etc.), not only in the Balkans



# Conclusions

- A series of various **secessionist wars** with different combatant groups (state and non-state) were fought between 1991 and 2001
- Former Yugoslavia is now broken into **seven independent countries**:
  - Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia



# Conclusions

- **Politicians tactically swapped communist rhetoric for ethno-nationalism** as a way to **gain, maintain, and consolidate** their **power** in a time of extreme national and international upheaval
- **Serbian:** Heroic past, portrayed Croats and Bosniaks as identity threats
- **Croatian:** Feared Serbian domination and control
- **Contributing Economic Disparities**



# Next Session...

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- **The 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland**



Questions? Feel free to email me =>

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