

Introduction

In the following study, Peter Trost analyses the strong interdependencies between economic and security-political factors in a conflict region, specifically focusing on the influence of economical reasons for the break-up of Former Yugoslavia. This is especially interesting as most studies tend to focus on the political aspects rather than concentrating on questions of economy when dealing with the disintegration processes leading to the destruction of the Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In a nutshell, the analysis is based on the hypothesis that from a comprehensive perspective, economic factors were decisive in triggering the break-up of Yugoslavia. I must be pointed out, however, that these economic reasons could only become destructive under a framework of strong nationalistic feelings.

Following an introduction to the most important theories of modern conflict research with special focus on economic aspects, the author characterises the development of the Yugoslav economy between 1945 and 1991. One central cause for the break-up of the SFRY raised is that the start of the economic reform process collided with a growing political polarisation in the late eighties and early nineties.

One direct consequence of this development was the strong urge towards secession by the economically higher developed Northern Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. These two entities saw their economic interests and prosperity endangered by a joint country and economy under Serb domination.

Other Yugoslav republics as Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were more reluctant in following the Croat and Slovenian path to independence as their individual economic development had not progressed so far at this moment. The political leadership in both republics lacked the confidence in autonomy out of economic reasons

and only took the final step towards independence as the political structures had followed the economic ones in disintegration.

The PfP Consortium Study Group on "Crisis Management in South East Europe" pursues an approach as comprehensive as possible in its evaluation of the conflict situation in the Balkans. The study by Peter Trost adds to these efforts by offering a viewpoint that helps to expand the field of roots and causes for the disintegration of the Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

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