

The Dissolution of Yugoslavia

BULLET PAGE

While not inevitable, Yugoslavia's dissolution had many causes, among them:

- The failure of the communists to create a legitimate political system capable of generating loyalty and support among the populace;
- economic deterioration, driving people to the point of despair and making them receptive to leaders promising to solve their problems;
- the rises of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia at the head of a "national revitalization" movement which sought political and territorial objectives incompatible with the interests of other republics and national groups;
- the persistence of irreconcilable national historical narratives that helped to sustain separate identities that undermined a shared Yugoslav identity;
- a resulting lack of a sense of common interest that might have encouraged political leaders and their constituents to preserve the federation .

By 1990, Yugoslavia's breakup could have been averted only by a common effort by domestic political leaders and, aided perhaps by the timely assistance of the international community.

- Instead, the ambition of political leaders and intellectuals in several republics, abetted or opposed Milosevic's agenda at the expense of Yugoslav unity
- Although the international community could have been more proactive in its attempts to save Yugoslavia, neither the United States, nor Germany, nor any other foreign power materially affected the course of dissolution.