

# Context

## The Balkans Since 1815



### 1815 to 1839: After the Congress of Vienna

The Ottoman Empire, having emerged from the Middle Ages predominant in the Balkans, controlled Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina at its northern fringes.



### 1914: Eve of the First World War

The Turks were driven from most of the Balkans in the 19th century and were replaced by rivalrous European powers. With Russian patronage, an independent Serbia was born alongside an Austrian-controlled Bosnia, where a Serbian nationalist ignited World War I by assassinating the Austrian crown prince.



### Between the Two World Wars

The Versailles conference created a unified kingdom of the south Slavs --



### Nov. 1942: Height of Axis Occupation

The Axis powers occupied Yugoslavia, creating a puppet state in Croatia ruled

Yugoslavia. It encompassed Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, with the capital in Belgrade and the lion's share of influence held by Serbs. Bosnia's Muslims were not recognized as a distinct group.

by local fascists who fought and butchered Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. Yugoslav Communist partisans led by Tito, as well as Serbian royalists known as Chetniks, fought the Nazis, and Tito emerged in control.



#### 1945 to 1990: Cold War Stability

Under Tito, Yugoslavia held together as a federation of six autonomous republics, although Serbs retained great influence, notably in the military. As Communism collapsed, Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, hastened Yugoslavia's disintegration with a blatantly nationalistic appeal to Serbs.

#### 1991 to 1995: Open Warfare

Fighting broke out in 1991 when Slovenia and Croatia seceded, then spread to Bosnia in 1992. After three years of bitter warfare characterized by atrocities and the creation of hundreds of thousands of refugees, a U.S.-sponsored peace accord for Bosnia was signed in Dayton, Ohio, in late 1995.

[Go to Article](#)