



# DUTCH DECISION-MAKING ON THE INTERVENTION IN THE YUGOSLAV WARS (1990-1995)

A Critique on the Security Theory

## Abstract

The Yugoslav wars were a complex series of conflicts that took place mostly between 1990 and 1995. Many different political actors securitized the issue by calling out the atrocities and violations of human rights that occurred. Dutch politicians played a significant role here and participation by the Netherlands in interventions in former Yugoslavia will be the focus of this essay. This political process of Dutch involvement in Yugoslavia will also serve as a case study to analyse and criticize the so-called security theory, proposed by the Copenhagen School.

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“Let that man be a Bosnian, Herzegovinian. Outside they don't call you by another name, except simply a Bosnian. Whether that be a Muslim (Bosniak), Serb or Croat. Everyone can be what they feel that they are, and no one has a right to force a nationality upon them.”

*-Josip Broz Tito*

### Introduction into the Yugoslav Wars

Following the death of its president Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia dissolved in the early nineties as ethnic and national groups sought to carve out a nation state of their own. Which year and date marked the official end of this conglomerate of nations is up to debate and depends on which actors you wish to focus on as some nations declared their independence before Yugoslavia officially ceased to exist. November 27, 1991 is a reasonably agreed upon date because this marked the United Nations accepting a resolution in which the borders of some of the individual republics were recognized.<sup>1</sup> Tito had hardhandedly kept nationalistic tensions under control up until his death. This relative internal stability rested mostly on his own strong leadership.<sup>2</sup> Tito had come to power by leading partisan forces to victory in axis-occupied Yugoslavia and afterward serving as prime minister and later president of the newly formed socialist republic.<sup>3</sup> Because of this military past and his de facto liberation of the country he later presided over, his rule was fairly unquestioned by previously anti-federal forces. He held a tight grip on the national army (JNA), the party and the presidential rule.<sup>4</sup> This made the political situation after his death all the more difficult because of the enormous power vacuum that had to be filled.<sup>5</sup>

As soon as this vacuum opened up, national and regional leaders of the six former states within the federation came into conflict with one another and what would turn out to be some of the most complicated and gruesome conflicts since the second world war, known

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<sup>1</sup>Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 2 2021), 394

<sup>2</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 7 2021), 93

<sup>3</sup> Ramet, Sabrina Petra. *Balkan Babel: The disintegration of Yugoslavia from the death of Tito to the fall of Milosevic*. Routledge, 2018, 5

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, Nigel, and Krunoslav Mikulan. "The Yugoslav Wars 1: Slovenia & Croatia 1991-95." (2006), 7

<sup>5</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 1 2021), 93

as the Yugoslav wars, erupted. To this day the tensions in the region have not fully come to a halt but the bulk of the violence in this region took place in the early to mid-nineties. Although the death of Tito certainly played a large role in the conflicts which followed a decade later, relations within the former Yugoslavia between the many different religious, ethnic and national groups had always rested on a knife's edge. These relations each have lengthy and violent histories of their own which go as far back as the sixth century and perhaps even further.<sup>6</sup> This is but one of many explanations for the eventual fall of Yugoslavia. Social, economic, ideological and other types of explanations have been given to this complex question, but for now the highlighting of the complexity of the situation will suffice.<sup>7</sup> The political system that was put in place after Tito's death made the situation even more complex. Representatives from the six states which Yugoslavia consisted of all had relatively equal say in a system which Tito implemented before his death. He wanted the federation to continue operating as one, but without his dominant character and leadership as a political glue this system fell apart.

The Yugoslav wars consisted of half a dozen major conflicts and several smaller ones which were all in some way connected, but only the Croatian and Bosnian conflicts will be quickly explained here. The people of Croatia sought independence and started forming their sovereign nation in 1990, much to the dismay of ethnic Serbians living within the Croatian borders. A referendum was held in which 93% of the vote went to the formation of an independent Croatia. The socialist republic of Croatia became the republic of Croatia with a new flag and fairly soon international recognition by the European Community and the United Nations followed. The president of this new nation was Franjo Tudman and he, like the Serbian president Milosevic, is often characterized as seeking a larger influence for his own state. In Tudman's case; a greater Croatia. The Serbians still tried to enforce a unified Yugoslavia and as far as they were concerned, this was an unlawful and unconstitutional secession. This led to a war between Serbians and Croats which would last up until 1995.

In 1992, the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia. 99% of the people of Bosnia voted for an independent state by referendum. As was the case with the Croatian secession, Serbs tried to boycott this referendum. International

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<sup>6</sup> Shrader, Charles R. *The Muslim-Croat civil war in central Bosnia: A military history, 1992-1994*. Vol. 23. Texas A&M University Press, 2003, 6

<sup>7</sup> Ramet, Sabrina P. *Thinking about Yugoslavia: scholarly debates about the Yugoslav breakup and the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*. Cambridge University Press, 2005, 54-71

recognition, however, followed suit and the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina recognized by the European community as well as the United States in April 1992.<sup>8</sup> This again led to a response from local ethnic Serbs and the Serbian government alike, as well as the Croatian government who supported local Croatians and Bosnians. Here the conflict took place mostly between Muslim Bosnians, often called Bosniaks, and ethnic Serbs living within Bosnian border. Each side was supported by a multitude of external forces with the Serbian government supporting the self-proclaimed Republika Sprska and, among others, Croatia supporting the Bosniaks. This conflict would also last until 1995 and would end up being the most violent of the Yugoslav wars.

On the global- or at least the European theatre, the wars in Yugoslavia played an important role as the first major conflict fought on European soil since the second world war. The cold war had just ended and during this time of international tension Yugoslavia had been a fairly successful example of a system that could exist in between the ideologies of East and West. The dissolution of this federation was therefore not only played out between national and ethnic groups within Yugoslavia itself but most of Europe and the rest of the world had a hand in these wars as well. Organisations such as the European Community which later became the European Union, as well as NATO and the UN would all play a part in this series of conflicts as this would be one of the first real tests of the peacekeeping capabilities within Europe of such institutions.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the conflicts within the Yugoslav wars can be very simplistically described as follows: Firstly, a nation tries to assert its independence from the republic of Yugoslavia with its own historic borders in mind. Then ethnic minorities living within those borders feel discriminated against or oppressed and wish for their communities to either join the country they feel ethnically connected to or wish become independent themselves. These two parties clash because neither group wants to give up on their idea of rightful territory and the conflict escalates by these groups being supported by external actors. The Bosnian war was such a conflict and because of the particularly large role the Dutch government played in its violence,

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<sup>8</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 5 2021), 526

<sup>9</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 4 2021), 490

this, along with the Croatia-Serbian war will be the focus of this essay. More conflicts in the late nineties and early 2000's also took place but since they are less relevant to the overall argument those will not be covered.

In the following chapters the security theory will be applied to many instances of Dutch decision making regarding the participation in the United Nations peace force UNPROFOR which was sent to Yugoslavia as an intervention. This was a complicated conflict and I shall not dive too deeply into the actual civil war or its atrocities. I shall almost exclusively look at how the Dutch political actors justified this participation to its audiences. My main source for the primary political documents will be so called "Kamerstukken". These are notes on debates held in parliament, letters sent by politicians and summaries of discussions. I shall also use a study into everything surrounding the European and Dutch participation produced by the Dutch research centre NIOD.

Much has been written on the Yugoslav wars as well as security studies as a whole. Many different theoretical approaches to conflicts exist and the security theory is but one of these theories.<sup>10</sup> Many historians have approached the Yugoslavian wars, as well as every individual conflict within these wars, from countless different angles and new approaches are still being applied to them. This along with the continuous publication by many archives and governments makes for quite a saturated market in terms of literature regarding the Yugoslavian wars.<sup>11</sup> The Bosnian civil war in particular has received a great amount of attention because of the extraordinarily violent nature of the conflict.

In this essay, the theoretical framework of the security theory will be described first and the context in which to read the rest of the chapters is given. The first of these next chapters deals with the possible intervention by the European Community and how Dutch politicians discussed this topic in open debate. The topic of the following chapter is the actual intervention forces UNPROFOR I and II and how it came to be that Dutch participation was achieved. In this manner I shall show examples of the difficulty of applying security theory and answer the question: How did the process of securitization take place in Dutch politics in relation to the UN interventions in former Yugoslavia and what does this say about the security theory as a whole?

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<sup>10</sup> Williams, Paul D., ed. *Security studies: an introduction*. Routledge, 2012. 13

<sup>11</sup> Radeljic, Branislav. "Complete and Incomplete Archives: An Analysis of Archival Material Documenting European Community-Yugoslav Relations." *The Historian* 77, no. 1 (2015), 82

## Theoretical framework

Security studies has become a field which receives increasing attention and discussion every year. This new interest in the field started around the turn of this century with for example terrorism becoming a phenomenon many political actors now have to deal with in the wake of September eleven, 2001. One of the more influential books in this field of study was written by the so-called Copenhagen school. In 1998 Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde published the book *Security: A new framework for analysis*.<sup>12</sup> In this book the three plead for a shift in security studies from a military focus into a much broader field of study with an increased emphasis on politics. They also offer a new theoretical framework which enables the study and deconstruction of securitizing phenomena. This theory is coined the Security Theory and in short, it describes how the process of taking extraordinary measures takes place. Securitization depends on the four following aspects; firstly, a securitizing actor is often a politician or a statesman but can also be more than one person. This actor seeks to securitize a problem in order for them to be able to take these extraordinary measures to combat it. Secondly there is the threat, or the referent subject. This is often an ideology or a group of people. For example extremism or terrorism are often securitized subjects. Thirdly, the referent object is that which is threatened by this referent subject. Freedom and democracy are examples of objects which are framed by the actor as worthy of protecting. Finally there needs to be an audience which has to be convinced of this threat as well as the worth of that which is at risk from the threat. If the securitizing actor convinces the audience that a referent object is sufficiently threatened by the referent subject, a successful securitization will have taken place and extraordinary measures can be taken, or so the theory states.<sup>13</sup>

Although the book *Security: A new framework for Analysis* made great strides in the field of security studies, criticism on the security theory has been around for as long as the book itself. Often this criticism is aimed at the lack of agency the audience is given when using this theoretical framework.<sup>14</sup> Many authors have applied the security theory to different case studies before and often times the conclusion that is drawn is that the theory does not lend itself that well to being used in practice. Many qualms often came down to the role of the

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<sup>12</sup> Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, (1998)

<sup>13</sup> Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, (1998), 36

<sup>14</sup> Balzacq, Thierry, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka. "Securitization' revisited: Theory and cases." *International Relations* 30, no. 4 (2016), 499

securitizing actor and the audience as well. A few examples to illustrate this: when Al Gore successfully convinced a very large, mostly younger group of people of the existential threat global warming posed, measures did not follow suit.<sup>15</sup> When Tony Blair failed to convince the British public to invade Iraq in the early 2000's, Blair made the executive decision to invade anyway by convincing a small group of important decision makers.<sup>16</sup> Often when a strong leader such as a dictator has to take extraordinary measures, he can simply do so and has no actual need for securitizing the issue. When for example a parliamentary democracy is in place, there is not simply one securitizing actor or one audience. This illustrates the difficulty in using this theory which is claimed to exist for actual application to real life conflicts and security issues.<sup>17</sup>

“Even if one speaks security in the name of the individual, claiming the rights, threats, or concerns of the individual constitutes an engagement in the public and political field; ‘individual security’ is in this respect always collective and political. Rather than conceptualizing security along a collective-individual dichotomy, one should focus on how political practices individualize certain threats, thereby locating them outside of the public, political realm, while others become visible as collective concerns.”<sup>18</sup>

Lene Hansen, who is a criticist of the security theory on the basis of the lack of attention to gender in the theory, has written on the Bosnian war while using many security discourses in her book: *Security as Practice: Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. Here she applies many theories such as the security theory to the Bosnian war. This book however mostly centres on the large security discourse on the subject and does not go into detail about the particular grievances with security theory that will be discussed here.

Thierry Balzacq is another influential writer on security studies and has published a number of articles on the security theory and its limitations.

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<sup>15</sup> Brzoska, Michael. "The securitization of climate change and the power of conceptions of security." *S&F Sicherheit und Frieden* 27.3 (2009): 137-145.

<sup>16</sup> Roe, Paul. "Actor, audience (s) and emergency measures: Securitization and the UK's decision to invade Iraq." *Security dialogue* 39.6 (2008): 615-635.

<sup>17</sup> Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, (1998), 7

<sup>18</sup> Hansen, Lene. *Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. Routledge, (2013), 32

“To be more explicit, the assumption of a speech act approach ultimately reduces security to a conventional procedure such as marriage or betting in which the ‘felicity circumstances’ (conditions of success) must fully prevail for the act to go through. I argue, on the contrary, that securitization is better understood as a strategic (pragmatic) practice that occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction.”<sup>19</sup>

This critique of Balzacq somewhat overlaps with the criticism being discussed in this essay. He claims that the formulation of how securitization is to take place is too much a rigid formula. It is not always the case that this process has to be successfully completed before any action is undertaken. Often a speech act takes place, thereby securitizing a subject but this does not always have the end goal of taking extraordinary measures. Balzacq in a few publications accredits more agency to the audience as well. This is where his and my criticism deviate. Often the audience does not actually have an important role to play at all, as will be shown by the examples given in this paper. Balzacq takes issue with the abstract level on which the security theory operates as well. This also aligns with the main argument of this essay in that it illustrates the lack of practicality when using the theory.

Security discourse is still a heavily written on and debated topic within conflict studies and international relations. Security theory laid the ground work for much of this writing and deserves a great amount of credit for pulling the study of security issues out of the military sphere and into the political. This does not however exempt the Copenhagen School from criticism and as others have done before, I will offer a criticism of my own by way of the case study of Dutch interventions in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>19</sup> Balzacq, Thierry. "The three faces of securitization: Political agency, audience and context." *European journal of international relations* 11, no. 2 (2005), 172

### The Run-up to the UN intervention (1991)

The Serbian and Croatian governments had already made it clear in 1991 that they would be in favour of a UN intervention being deployed in the Croat-Serbian war.<sup>20</sup> It would last another five months before these troops would actually be employed. This had to do with the conditions under which the UN wished to operate. A ceasefire in the warzone had to be in place before the UN would intervene because its main purpose was the maintaining of peace, not as much enforcing it. During talks of military intervention, a continuous combined effort by the EC and the UN was responsible for peace talks between all the belligerent parties. Countless conferences and peace talks were held and treaties were agreed upon and broken many times throughout the entirety of the fighting. Because these acts of mediation are perhaps even more complicated than the interventions which existed alongside them, I shall not discuss them further here.<sup>21</sup>

When the fifteenth ceasefire finally held for a time, the moment had arrived. The newly formed UNPROFOR or United Nations Protection Force would be responsible for overseeing the peace negotiations between the local authorities. This name was also a slight deviation from regular UN nomenclature because of a lack of country names in the abbreviation. This because the naming of certain states would imply their existence in the eyes of the UN and this alone would probably have infuriated certain groups. 14000 military personnel would be sent to Croatia. This military force would later become known as UNPROFOR I, which was mainly concerned with the Croatian Serbian war. It might seem strange that Milosevic would welcome such an intervention in a war which he had only to gain from but some context is required here. Since the peace force kept the belligerent parties from fighting they acted as a sort of barrier between the two, creating a de facto border. Since the troops were only stationed in conflict areas within Croatia, this created clear enclaves of Serbian influence within Croatia. These areas could perhaps eventually be added to a greater Serbia because it had almost an enforcement of the UN behind it now.

The Dutch government had shown interest in joining this first peace force into the area. The Netherlands had a history of participation in UN interventions such as in Lebanon but did

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<sup>20</sup>Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 4 2021), 489

<sup>21</sup>Touval, Saadia. *Mediation in the Yugoslav wars: the critical years, 1990-95*. Springer, (2001), 180

not have the best reputation when it came to the execution of the actual deployment.<sup>22</sup> The Dutch therefore had something to prove and when talks of an intervention force started to turn into strong likelihoods, the government started considering participating. The ruling cabinet of the Dutch government at the time was known as Lubbers III. This was a cabinet formed by two parties, the CDA and the PvdA under the leadership of CDA prime minister Ruud Lubbers. This cabinet served until May 1994 so most of the policy regarding the Yugoslav conflicts were to be decided on by these politicians. Lubbers is the longest seated prime minister the Dutch government has seen to this day with sixteen years of presidency. The cabinet works as the actual enforcing part of the government while the rest of the parliament functions as opposition. Everyone in parliament is however able to suggest new legislature. If then CDA or PvdA are mentioned here, you will know that the politician in question is part of the ruling cabinet and all other parties mentioned will be opposition.

“If the Netherlands wants to remain credible as the chairman of the European Community, we have to take action now.”<sup>23</sup> Defence spokesman Ton de Kok(CDA) had this to say in a debate in November 1991 about Dutch involvement in Yugoslavia. This is a clear case of securitization so I will apply the security theory as follows: the securitizing actor here is Ton de Kok, the referent subject is the situation in Yugoslavia and the referent object is Dutch credibility as chairman of the European Community. The audience is the ruling cabinet and in particular the minister of foreign affairs, Van den Broek. It is strange then for a CDA member to criticize a fellow member of the cabinet and this makes applying a security theory here perhaps even more difficult. This then is a securitization and perhaps even a successful one. The extraordinary measures in the form of extensive economic sanctions followed. These measures are the proposed “action” here.

“After the de facto dissolution of the federation by the Serbians, the European Community and the Netherlands have to face the facts. Or do we have to wait until the Serbians have

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<sup>22</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een ‘veilig gebied’. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area (NIOD)*, <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 10 2021), 501

<sup>23</sup> Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (onwards: TKSG), Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 15, November 26 1991, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/resultaten?pg=10&q=%28c.product-area%3D%3D%22sgd%22%29and%28cql.textAndIndexes%3D%2222181%22%29%20AND%20w.dossienummer%3D%3D%2222181%22&zv=22181&col=Alle&hist=1&pagina=9> (accessed March 3 2021), 1

realised their goal of a Greater Serbia, until even more thousands of lives will have been lost by the uncontrolled violence by the Serbians and the federal army?"<sup>24</sup>

VVD chamber member Jan Dirk Blaauw, in an emergency debate originally intended to discuss the island of Timor half a world away, had this to say about the situation in Yugoslavia. Again I shall apply the security theory here. The securitizing actor is Blaauw, the referent subject is the idea of a Greater Serbia, the referent object is the thousands of lives which are at risk from the national army and the audience again would seem to be Van den Broek. This takes place before the idea of UNPROFOR was called into life and shows an example of the activism of Dutch politics from an early point.

Hans van den Broek responds to Blaauw in the same way as to others, who I leave out because their arguments are largely the same. The minister of Foreign Affairs agrees with the majority of the sentiment which was pleaded by many members of the second chamber. He states that alongside the economic sanctions, which were argued for by De Kok, the European community was also preparing a military force to be sent to Yugoslavia. This last point as a response to the idea that economic sanctions alone would not be enough. This extraordinary measure would imply that a successful securitization had taken place. The European Community however never deployed such a force and eventually the UN would be the one to send UNPROFOR to keep the peace. In fact the European Community which was under Dutch presidency at this point, is often regarded as being slow and indecisive when it came to the situation in Yugoslavia. The Dutch parliament was full of feelings of activism and those in charge like Van den Broek seemed to agree with the idea of heavy involvement in the warzones. Is this a failed securitization then? The fact that a process of securitization can fail is not a criticism on the theory in and of itself. It simply means that the intended audience was not convinced. The audience however is a tricky concept in situations such as this one. If the audience indeed was minister Van den Broek, who was convinced of the referent object and subject, he was apparently not in a position to make such an intervention happen in the context of the European Community. This could very well be true because in an organization as complex as the European Community, the wishes of a single party do not automatically lead to the intended outcome. If we take the European Community as audience, these examples

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<sup>24</sup> TKSG, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, Handelingen 0000019271, november 21 1991, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000019271> (accessed March 4 2021), 27 1641

of securitization would have probably fallen on deaf ears because a debate in Dutch parliament will not have been a deciding factor in meetings within the EC.

The audience in cases of securitization is often a difficult concept because of multiple reasons demonstrated here. In this case the ones who we would consider the securitizing actors tried to convince an audience which was supposedly in a position to take these extraordinary measures. Van den Broek then was not able to take make these measures happen and failed in convincing a larger group of his beliefs. There is also the implication that audiences might not even matter in cases of securitization. If audiences are convinced and no action is subsequently taken, apparently those in a position of power did not recognize that audience as sufficient authority to decide policy. If audiences are convinced however, not always does an extraordinary measure follow. Most of these debates took place at the end of 1991 while simultaneously talks of participation in a UN intervention force were also under way.

## Participation in UNPROFOR I and II

In 1992 UNPROFOR I was formed as a UN peacekeeping force in the occupied areas of Croatia. Dutch politics were in favour of Dutch participation and even suggested a larger area of action for this mission to include Bosnia. Here I will give examples of securitization in Dutch parliament regarding the situation in both Croatia and Bosnia as well as the subsequent intervention forces. These examples will illustrate the lack of analytical merit the security theory has to offer in conflicts such as these. The examples used in these chapters are used in chronological order

### UNPROFOR I

While the situation in Yugoslavia was getting worse, UNPROFOR I was eventually called into life in the spring of 1992 by the UN. The Dutch offered to participate but first were rejected. This because Dutch forces in the area would have a higher risk because of the role the Netherlands played as chairman of the European Community. They were accused of bias by many Serbians and this would translate to attitudes towards troops on the ground.<sup>25</sup> Later however, the UN did invite the Dutch government to join and asked for financial and military support. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1992 the cabinet officially decided to agree to a Dutch contribution in the form of around three hundred troop who were to be stationed as a “verbindingseenheid”.

*“With the involvement in UNPROFOR, the Netherlands actively contributes to further endeavours in finding a solution to the conflict in Yugoslavia. Dutch involvement in finding a peaceful resolution to this conflict is apparent in the role of the Netherlands in its position of chairman of the European Community.”<sup>26</sup>*

Van den Broek as minister of foreign affairs and Ter Beek, the minister of defence in a letter to parliament made it known that the cabinet had decided on the contribution to UNPROFOR. This was subsequently debated in parliament with chairmen of every party making it known what their party’s stance was on the participation. Every spokesperson seemed very enthusiastic about the Netherlands finally participating in a peacekeeping force

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<sup>25</sup>Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een ‘veilig gebied’. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 16 2021), 510

<sup>26</sup>TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 19, March 3 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022383> (accessed March 7 2021), 5

for Yugoslavia.<sup>27</sup> Van Middelkoop (GPV) argued that The Netherlands had a constitutional obligation to promote international stability and peace and also brought up the “defensienota” which dedicated a page to the role of the Dutch government in this global security.<sup>28</sup> Using Van Middelkoop as an example of securitization; he himself was the securitizing actor, the referent object is international stability and the referent subject is not explicitly stated but when looking at the rest of the debate, ‘tensions and violations of human rights’ are mentioned and seems to be the threat discussed in the entire discussion. The audience again is difficult to point out. Van Middelkoop is officially addressing the ministers of foreign affairs and defence as representatives of the government. They however, were the ones who had already decided on participation without the need to consult people like Van Middelkoop. This debate took place on April first 1992, after the announcement by Van den Broek that The Netherlands would contribute to the intervention force. As is often the case with these securitizing speech acts, it takes place after the extraordinary measure has already been taken a month before.

With a few grievances with the safety of the Dutch military personnel and the deployment of conscripted troops aside, it seemed the entirety of the Dutch government was on board for this operation. This makes it apparent then that what was keeping such an intervention back, was not a willingness to act on behalf of the political actors in the Netherlands. The request to participate was first posed informally and Van Den Broek accepted on behalf of the government.<sup>29</sup> Informal talks were the manner in which decisions on these significant matters were taken. When informal and out-of-sight politics take a precedent over open debate, are we even capable to see the different aspects that constitute a case of securitization? There was no parliamentary audience present at such talks and if there was, we will probably never know. The same goes for the referent subject and object. The whole of the speech act takes place behind closed doors between a minister and a representative of the UN. This calling to action by members of parliament could still be framed as a case of, but it bears little significance if the extraordinary measures that are being decided

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<sup>27</sup> TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 20, April 1 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022384> (accessed March 10 2021), 2

<sup>28</sup> TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 20, April 1 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022384> (accessed March 10 2021), 3

<sup>29</sup> TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 19, March 3 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022383> (accessed March 7 2021), 1

on are not even possible within that context. The same goes for the initial rejection by the UN on the offer of Dutch contribution. When Dutch ministers such as Van den Broek spoke to UN representatives and somehow assured them the higher risks for Dutch troops were not so dangerous after all, the UN changed their attitude and allowed for the participation anyway. These talks often did not take place in open debates with transcripts for later generations to look over and scrutinize. These small scale and informal “speech acts” are considerably more important in the coming of the Dutch intervention in Bosnia than they are accredited with.

## UNPROFOR II

In the meantime the situation in Bosnia also worsened. Blaauw and De Kok with the announcement of this UNPROFOR I already suggested that the area of operations should be made bigger with the inclusion of the Bosnian warzone alongside the Croatian areas. Van den Broek responded by stating that the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was relatively stable and did not warrant such a force.<sup>30</sup> This implies a fairly early understanding of the situation by several Dutch politicians that the situation in Bosnia was likely to escalate or had already escalated. Later, UNPROFOR II would be called into life with specific objectives to protect area’s in Bosnia. In this UNPROFOR II, Dutch military personnel would play a decisive role in the eventual genocide at Srebrenica by failing to prevent it from occurring.

In multiple debates on the situation in Yugoslavia, it becomes apparent that Dutch politicians were acutely aware of instances of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia. Around this time images of concentration camps and violence had come out of Bosnian warzone and this shows in public debate. De Hoop Scheffer (CDA) put the situation into words quite poignantly in the debate mentioned earlier on April first 1992:

“The unorthodox situation there requires unorthodox measures. Potential action however will have to be legitimized by the United Nations or subdivisions thereof.”<sup>31</sup> De Hoop Scheffer calls for unorthodox, or put into security terms; extraordinary measures to be taken but also realises that these decisions have to be made within the context of the UN security council. This illustrates both the will of Dutch politicians to securitize the issue and the reality that this securitization is out of their hands.

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<sup>30</sup> TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 20, April 1 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022384> (accessed March 12 2021), 6

<sup>31</sup> TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 22, April 1 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022386> (accessed March 14 2021), 2

*“If the political will to end such a large scale slaughter does not exist, you might as well put the money intended for an intervention force into other matters.”<sup>32</sup>*

De Kok was one of the politicians to lead the charge in trying to convince the Dutch cabinet and the public of intervening in the now much escalated conflict in Bosnia.<sup>33</sup> During the second half of 1992 in multiple media outlets he propagated the idea of an intervention force and for his efforts he was somewhat ridiculed by other politicians for trying to achieve something that was not possible.<sup>34</sup> The Dutch could only send such an intervention in the context of a UN force. The UN however, was not yet decided on whether the situation in Bosnia warranted such a measure at this point. De Kok tried to securitize the situation in Bosnia to achieve an intervention force. He tried to convince the general public and the government in order to make this happen but these two audiences were not in a position to actually manifest such extraordinary action. When we analyse the securitization as described by the Copenhagen School, the securitizing actor is supposed to be the one to take measures and De Kok here is not in that position at all.

The cabinet could hardly send an independent Dutch intervention force to Bosnia without the context of a larger international organization. This organization, being the UN security council was the actor which would actually decide on this. Maybe De Kok should have been addressing the security council then. This however, was not a valid possibility; the security council was the alpha and omega of securitizing these conflicts. These fifteen representatives decide on world events and barely have to take audiences or local Dutch politicians into consideration.

In august 1992, in a letter to the Second Chamber, Van den Broek stated that the Dutch government, in light of the reports of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia Herzegovina, swiftly wished the international community to respond with armed forces. If another such force was to be deployed, he stated the Dutch government would be willing to supply around

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<sup>32</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een ‘veilig gebied’. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area (NIOD)* <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 19 2021), 559

<sup>33</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een ‘veilig gebied’. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area (NIOD)* <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 18 2021), 560

<sup>34</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een ‘veilig gebied’. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area (NIOD)* <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 18 2021), 813

eight hundred troops to this military intervention.<sup>35</sup> The UN initially rejected this offer of a Dutch battalion being sent to Yugoslavia because of accusations of bias by the Serbian government as well as the UN policy of having a unilateral division of forces from every member state.<sup>36</sup> Again the contents of this letter can be framed as securitization. Van den Broek addresses the second chamber and frames the referent subject as the genocidal acts and the referent object as human rights. His audience is the second chamber but it is strange that he would have to securitize the issue to this audience. He is after all the one in the position to make these claims of participation. The second chamber simply serves as a controlling entity in most situations.

“In the current world order it is apparently difficult to adequately respond; for the time being, international law does not have the legitimacy to end the war forcibly if necessary. Most countries that are involved with the problem of have concluded that all parties are guilty of the current situation in Yugoslavia but the root of the problem is shaped by the tendency of Serbian leadership (not the population) to realise their aspirations of a Greater Serbia through *fait accompli* politics.”<sup>37</sup>

I want to end with this remark made by Van den Broek in another meeting on the situation in Yugoslavia. He states that in the current world order, it is apparently very difficult to act swiftly and decisively when it comes to ending the violations of human rights and the conflict as a whole. This aligns fairly well with the criticism proposed in this essay. It is not a simple case of securitizing an issue and then being able to intervene in the conflict. Since international organizations like the EU and the UN exist, leaders of individual states have rules to abide by and have to unanimously agree on action before it is taken. This not only makes it more difficult to organize such actions quickly, it makes it infinitely more complex when trying to apply security theory to it. The securitizing actor in all of this seems to be the UN security council. The members of this council decide on the actions that are taken and only have to convince the other members. National politics then seem relatively insignificant.

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<sup>35</sup> TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 23, August 24 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000022387> (accessed March 20 2021), 2

<sup>36</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een ‘veilig gebied’. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport> (accessed March 30 2021), 716

<sup>37</sup>TKGS, Kamerstukken 1991-1992, 22181, nr. 27, September 21 1992, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/0000013303> (accessed March 20 2021), 6

If security theory is intended for application to real life conflicts such as the Dutch political process and the Bosnian war, the ways in which you can apply it are both endless and non-existent. As shown through these examples, Van den Broek, De Kok and De Hoop Scheffer are all securitizing actors as well as audience in this discussion but neither as an audience or as a securitizing actor are they in a position to make these important decisions themselves.

## Conclusion

The security theory has contributed greatly to the field of security studies. Conflicts were no longer to be studied just from a military perspective but among others, from a political one. The theory made us understand the motivation behind certain speech acts as being an intent to securitize an issue. If that was all the theory attempted to do, there would have been no point of contention here. When we use the theory to try and explain significant foreign policy decisions, such as participation in an international military intervention, often do problems arise. Securitization and conflicts as a whole are too complex to be poured into the mould of the four aspects of security theory. If the violence in Bosnia is to be taken as an example, this essay only dealt with a fragment of the Dutch decision-making on the issue. This process of securitization resulting in participation in UNPROFOR must have happened in many other countries that had debates on the question of intervention. Is every individual politician commenting on the issue a case of securitization, or can we see the whole of the political process in the Netherlands as one act of securitization? If we assume the latter, another problem still remains; the political actors in the Netherlands were not in the position to take extraordinary measures. These whole processes of securitization then did not have a goal.

My criticism regarding the security theory can be broken down into two main arguments. The first being that the whole process of securitization in situations like the Yugoslav wars is too complicated. For example, audiences are often already convinced of threats such as with the debate on an intervention in Croatia. Politicians tried convincing Van den Broek who had already stated that he agreed but that an intervention had to take place within the context of the UN. This overlaps with the fact that securitizing actors are often not in a position to take measures and this makes the goal of securitization unachievable.

The second part of criticism is that when an apparent successful securitization takes place, it often takes place after the measure has been decided on. This was the case with the participation in UNPROFOR I. Politicians securitized to achieve a measure that was already decided on by the minister of foreign affairs, which he made public in a letter to the Second Chamber only for politicians to then start securitizing that decision.

In the end the UN decided on what measures to take and the Netherlands simply followed.<sup>38</sup> When van den Broek was asked to act in Bosnia he stated his hands were tied by the UN. When the cabinet announced it would contribute to UNPROFOR I, it did so in a letter aimed at the second chamber. The cabinet did not need to convince the rest of government, let alone the Dutch public of this action. Public outcry is an afterthought in the case described here so those in positions of power can decide on these matters within a group of 75 people, if that. Not only public opinion is an afterthought however. The cabinet makes the decisions and often times does the securitization only come after. It serves more as a justification afterwards for the extraordinary measures than as a condition that has to be fulfilled before this action can be taken. Executive decisions are often made without the need to convince anyone of the prudence of this decision. Backroom politics and individual motivations play a much larger role than we accredit them in theories like this.

So how did the process of securitization take place in Dutch politics in relation to the interventions in former Yugoslavia and what does this say about the security theory as a whole?

The political climate in The Netherlands during the period in which the Yugoslav wars took place, was one of activism. As I have shown, many politicians called for an intervention even before the UNPROFOR would be formed. These politicians spoke of violence, genocide and violation of human rights to an audience which was agreeable to them. Once these intervention forces in the form of UNPROFOR I and II were formed, the Netherlands was initially refused and only after informal talks was invited to join anyway. For their part in debates politicians like De Kok and Blaauw can be framed within security theory, but it is not a useful theoretical framework in these situations. If the end goal is an extraordinary measure, the securitizing actor actually has to be in a position of achieving this goal. This is often not the case and as Balzacq has argued before, often these measures are taken without a securitization taking place. This was the case with the UN security council deciding on action and it is the case with many other instances of conflict and security issues.

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<sup>38</sup> Romijn, P et al. *Hoofdrapport: Srebrenica, een 'veilig gebied'. Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area* (NIOD), <https://www.niod.nl/nl/srebrenica-rapport/rapport>, (accessed March 30 2021), 163

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