This study examines the western management of the Yugoslav crisis 1991-1995. The essential aim of the study is twofold. Firstly, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning the western management of the Yugoslav crisis by analysing the case from new perspectives. Secondly, the study assesses the explanatory power of the perspectives with regard to this particular empirical case.

The fundamental theoretical framework of the study draws from an approach originally presented by Graham T. Allison in his work “Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis” (1971). Allison demonstrated that the results of the researchers are heavily dependent on the conceptual lenses through which they regard their research object: different explanatory models produce different explanations for the same foreign policy event. Consequently, a combination of the models should be used in order to complete a comprehensive analysis of the event.

The basic research problem of the study is captured in the following questions: Why did the western actors become involved in the management of the Yugoslav crisis? Why did that involvement develop the way it did during 1991-1995? In order to answer these questions, the empirical material is analysed from four different analytical perspectives: the international system perspective, the state perspective, the domestic perspective, and the individual decision-maker perspective.

The study is carried out as a qualitative literature analysis. The main research material consists of literature dealing with the Yugoslav crisis, including books and articles of the most respected journals of international politics.

The main findings of the study can be summarised as follows: each perspective explains the western management of the Yugoslav crisis by emphasizing different features, as can be expected. The suggested explanatory factors range from the structure of the international system to the national interests of the western states involved, their domestic political circumstances, and the personal preferences of the foreign policy decision-makers. The discussion about the explanatory power of the perspectives demonstrates that the best analysis of the western management of the Yugoslav crisis is achieved by using a combination of the explanations produced by the perspectives.