

## **FOREWORD**

For some time this book had been weighing on my mind. I had to write it. This is the story of a person who suddenly finds himself president of a country on the verge of break-up and war. There are probably few people, even looking back in history, who have found themselves in the kind of situation I landed in back in 1989. Such a situation was only possible in a time of enormous change, when the old world order, which had seemed for decades to be set in stone, was falling apart.

Such monumental shifts very often destroy individuals, but for me it meant elevation to a position I could not even have dreamed about earlier.

My book attempts to answer some of the questions that people will continue to ask in years to come: why and how did Yugoslavia fall apart, why did hundreds of thousands have to die, and why did millions have to flee their homes?

The book explains the process behind the death of the idea that Yugoslavia could still be transformed into a democratic and modern country. I was an active participant and an eyewitness to key developments. At that time I became involved in saving Slovenia, negotiations, war, more negotiations, ceasefire, and the withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army from Slovenia. Foreign statesmen and journalists have often asked me how Slovenia succeeded so miraculously in escaping from the chaos of the Yugoslav war. My answers are in this book. The Yugoslavia of that time no longer exists. But Slovenia today is an oasis of peace and economic prosperity.