

ITALY'S BALKAN STRATEGIES

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THE FOREIGN POLICY OF YUGOSLAVIA 1945-1980 DÉTENTE AS REGIONAL COOPERATION: ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS

Abstract: The foreign policy of Communist Yugoslavia formed in 1945, was undoubtedly Tito's personal creation. The principal objective of its foreign policy was to maintain the internal political system and independence of the state created by the *coup d'état* of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at the second Antifascist Council of National Liberation (AVNOJ) held in Jajce in November 1943. Even though Tito was the most committed ideological follower of Stalin, three years of independent Yugoslav foreign policy that consisted of territorial demands towards its neighbors provoked the Tito-Stalin split in June 1948.

Forced to restructure his foreign policy, Tito lived through first a period of cooperation with the West (1951-1956), then through a period of close relations with the Eastern Block from 1956 onwards, and especially from 1962 to 1968. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia obliged the Yugoslav communist leader to look for other solutions, such as non-alignment and a regional cooperation in Europe, namely with Italy. Italo-Yugoslav relations in the era of détente were a demonstration how a local priorities were able to bridge the Cold War type of ideological and strategic divide in Europe.

Keywords: *Tito, Yugoslavia, Italy, communism, non-alignment, détente*

The sense and purpose behind the Yugoslav foreign policy under Tito were multi-decennial efforts to advocate and defend the ideology and political order established as a result of the civil war of 1941-1945 in the sphere of international relations. During the German and Italian occupation of the country, the communist-led Partisan detachments under the command of Josip Broz

Tito, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), fought a civil war against the loyalist troops of the Yugoslav Army in Homeland led by General Dragoljub Mihailović. The outcome of the civil war was not, however, resolved on the battlefield in Yugoslavia; rather, it was a consequence of the anti-Nazi coalition's decision to send the Anglo-Saxon armies to create a second European front by landing in Normandy in June 1944 instead in the Balkans.

Ever since the German attack on the USSR in June 1941, Stalin had pressed the British (and later the Americans as well) to open a second front in Europe. Churchill did not believe that the Anglo-Saxon armies could triumph over the Wehrmacht in a head-to-head encounter, therefore he thought that Nazi Germany should first be worn out by aerial attacks, economic blockades and a series of peripheral assaults (in North Africa, Italy, perhaps even the Balkans) before the mortal blow could be dealt by landing in Northern France.¹ Contrary to Churchill, George Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff was determined to land in Normandy during the summer of 1944 and deal the final blow to Hitler's forces. Moreover, he was categorically opposed Churchill's suggestion of engaging American troops in the Balkans. President Roosevelt's support, the drastically greater industrial and economic potential of the US, and the significantly larger number of American divisions planned for the second front all contributed to the abandoning of Churchill's peripheral assault strategy in the summer of 1943.²

A unanimous consensus within the anti-Nazi coalition was reached during the Tehran Conference held from November 28th to December 2nd 1943, when Stalin argued that every operation other than landing in Northern France would be a dispersion of power which would not contribute to victory over Nazism. By allowing Stalin to finally discard the plans for a Balkan landing, Roosevelt (consciously) and Churchill (reluctantly) accepted the supremacy of Soviet military and political interests in the region. Hence, it was only natural that they reached a consensus in Tehran about extending their support in equipment and material resources to the forces led by the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito, simultaneously acknowledging him as the Allied commander on the Yugoslav battlefield.³ The final outcome of the decision made in Tehran was the entry of Red Army troops into Serbia in October 1944, under the provision of the Tito-Stalin agreement concluded in Moscow in September. The presence of 300,000 strong-Soviet divisions in Yugoslavia decided the outcome of the civil war and allowed Tito to

¹ D. Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 122-124

² R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1995, 411.

³ Proceedings from the meeting between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, Tehran, 28 November 1943; *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), *The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), 493-496.

establish a dictatorship of the Stalinist kind in Yugoslavia. In all Balkan states where the Soviet armies arrived, Soviet-type regimes were installed.⁴ The only exception was Greece, where the British landed in October 1944; even so, the establishment of a Stalinist regime was prevented only after a civil war which raged on for years.⁵

American strategists and Roosevelt's administration in general were trying to predict all consequences of the decision made in Tehran. By early 1943, the State Department (followed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in September) concluded that the USSR would dominate post-war Eastern Europe and that it was beyond the US to prevent such an outcome.⁶ President Roosevelt and his administration realized that it would be impossible to triumph over National Socialism and at the same time prevent the creation of a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. The contribution of the USSR to the fight against Hitler was simply irreplaceable, as even after the Normandy landing in June 1944 the Nazis still had 90 divisions on the Western and 250 on the Eastern front.⁷ Since the imperative of achieving victory over Nazism demanded that the Soviet sphere of interest in Eastern Europe remain unchallenged, Roosevelt's administration strove to impose a minimum of general principles on which the post-war organization of Europe would rest. Accepting that Eastern Europe would be in the Soviet sphere of interest, what Roosevelt had in mind was the concept of an "open sphere of interest" along the lines of the American sphere of interest in Latin America. The American president believed that the USSR would agree to take part in the global system of international relations based on the project of the United Nations. Within this framework, the Soviet "open sphere of interest" would entail the domination of Soviet military interests in post-war Eastern Europe, but not the establishment of Stalinist regimes according to the Soviet model. Roosevelt believed that after the resolution of the conflict in Eastern Europe it would be necessary to introduce the concepts of democratic political order and multi-party system as well as a liberal economic game including the freedom of economic trade with Western Europe and the US.⁸

⁴ V. Dimitrov, *Stalin's Cold War. Soviet Foreign Policy, Democracy and Communism in Bulgaria, 1941-48* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 77.

⁵ Churchill's tardy efforts to organize an Anglo-American landing in Istria in August 1944 (Thomas M. Barker, "The Ljubljana Gap Strategy: Alternative to Anvil/Dragoon or Fantasy", *The Journal of Military History*, 56, 1, 62-63), as well as to secure a British sphere of interest in the Balkans alongside the Soviet one in direct negotiations with Stalin, did not prove successful. Churchill to Roosevelt, October 18th 1944 in F. L. Loewenheim, H. D. Langle, M. Jonas, eds., *Roosevelt and Churchill, their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975), 586-588). The agreement they reached became obsolete with the advance of the Soviet armies.

⁶ J. L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 74.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸ E. Mark, "American policy towards Eastern Europe and the origins of the Cold War, 1941-1946: an alternative interpretation", *Journal of American History*, 68, 2, 1981, 320-21; L. C. Gardner, *Spheres of Influence. The Partition of Europe from Munich to Yalta* (London: Murray, 1992), 150,

The aforementioned American demands and the fact that the decisions made at the Tehran Conference placed Yugoslavia in the Soviet sphere of interest provided the framework for the foreign policy led by Tito's movement and the state he created following World War II. Its basic tasks will be to – within these outlines – safeguard the power of the Communist Party and the independence of communist Yugoslavia. There is no doubt, however, that the inclusion in the Soviet sphere of interest was by far the more challenging of the two given elements, for ideological as well as geostrategic reasons. In the first years following the war, this inclusion seemed natural because the second Yugoslavia had been founded on the principle of the Communist Party's absolute power. This fundamental postulate would remain unchallenged even after the split with Stalin in 1948; the only difference would be that the inclusion of Yugoslavia in the Soviet sphere of interest hereafter became the main problem of Yugoslav foreign policy and remained so until the fall of the Berlin Wall and her breakup in 1992.

The absolute power of the CPY meant that it also controlled the country's foreign policy, despite the existence of all institutions of formal democracy in Yugoslavia – from the National Assembly to the Department of Foreign Affairs. Democracy was merely formal – professedly people's since supposedly placed in the hands of the people – because it allowed no opposition at all, institutionalized or otherwise. Tito and his associates firmly believed in the Messianic legitimacy of their Communist dictatorship. In one-party political system, the power over all matters – including those of foreign policy – rested in the hands of the Communist Party, and nowhere more so than in the hands of J. B. Tito, its Secretary-General, who would, after being appointed Prime Minister and then President of Yugoslavia, finally be awarded the latter title for life. The foreign policy of communist Yugoslavia was no doubt a personal creation of Tito's; this was not because he was a great strategist or a trained diplomat, but due to the nature of one-party systems, it was him who made final decisions concerning the foreign policy strategy of the second Yugoslavia. Thus, for example, the widespread debate among our historians about the authorship of the policy of non-alignment is in fact moot – cooperation with the Third World became the Yugoslav official policy only when Tito accepted it, previously having been just one of the options available to Yugoslav foreign policy. In Yugoslavia, the Communist state as a one party dictatorship was embodied in Tito's person and his Stalin-like personal cult. On lower levels of the communist government, others did make decisions in his name; in matters of foreign policy, however, the final decisions were personally made by Tito in the name of the whole country.

From its beginnings in November 1943 until Tito's death in 1980, the history of Yugoslav foreign policy was in fact a series of chronologically linked strategies whose coherence rested on a common goal, that is, paths and ways

162, 172; W. F. Kimbal, *The Juggler, Franklin Roosevelt as a Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 102, 169; B. Arcidiacono, "L'Europe balkanique entre guerre et paix, relations interalliées et partage en spheres", *Relations internationales*, 47/3, 1986, 352-54.

employed to preserve the Communist rule and the independence of the second Yugoslavia. Her inclusion in the Soviet sphere of interest caused this battle to be fought first and foremost against the USSR, both on the ideological and the geostrategic front.

If we take the relations with the USSR as our basic criterion, the foreign policy of the second Yugoslavia can be divided into four distinct parts: the loyal follower period (1945-1948); the conflict (1948-1956); cooperation (1957-1968); détente (1968-1980). Throughout all these periods, there can be no doubt as to the link between the communist ideology and foreign policy; the decisive influence of the relations with the USSR on the orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy is also beyond question. The alternating periods of cooperation and open or latent conflicts (there would be no final breaks after Stalin's death) prove that the Yugoslav Communists thought their country's ideological legitimacy no less important than its independence. The foreign policy of Yugoslavia had to convince the international communist movement and public opinion that it was indeed possible for Communism to exist outside the USSR and the Soviet bloc.

The USSR's Most Loyal Follower: Yugoslavia during the Cold War 1945-1948

It was the main objective of the foreign policy led by Tito's Yugoslavia that caused the Cold War to begin long before the term itself was coined and its meaning established. The explanation for this hypothesis lies first and foremost in the plans of the movement under Tito's leadership. For Tito and his movement, the revolution was the main objective; the struggle against the German and Italian forces present in Yugoslavia was merely the means to this end. Therefore, during talks with the 717th Nazi division in March 1943, Tito (via his envoys) stated that he saw no reason for conflicts, because the side that the Partisans wanted to defeat was their enemy in the civil war – the Yugoslav Army in Homeland under the command of General Mihailović. There is no doubt that Tito considered the war against the Nazis to be just a passing episode in the revolutionary process and that he was convinced that Hitler would be defeated. However, it was of utmost importance that after the Nazis had been defeated the communist-led Partisans will come to power in Yugoslavia with the help of the Red Army. In contrast, if after the defeat of the Nazis the Mihailović forces were to seize power with the support of their Anglo-American allies, who would – in this scenario – land on the Adriatic coast, the fate of the Tito-led communist revolution would be sealed. The main aim of both Tito and the CPY was the revolution and a Stalinist Popular Front;⁹ the war merely provided a favorable

⁹ The policy of the Stalinist Popular Front, proclaimed by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935, consisted of making alliances of communists with other political parties in order to reinforce the country's capacity to withstand Nazi pressure and in the case of

moment for the realization of their revolutionary plans. The ideological framework of Tito and his movement was Stalinist and had been adopted before the war, but the manner in which they employed it in Yugoslavia was an indication of the relations which would be established in Europe a few years after the war. The best evidence that Tito and his Partisans were the forerunners of a way of thinking later described as "Cold War logic" lies in their relations with the Anglo-American allies during the struggle for international recognition of their movement and the territorial ambitions they showed after the war.

The Struggle for International Recognition

In December 1943, Tito's movement had no legal or political legitimacy whatsoever, except their participation in the struggle against the Nazis. But his ambitions were much greater: to organize a coup d'état and establish a people's government, and this could only be realized with the recognition from Anglo-American allies, as there was no doubt that the Soviets would, for their part, offer their recognition. It was Churchill who gave Tito the opportunity to solve the problem of his movement's international recognition. In early 1944, the British Prime Minister proposed an agreement between King Peter II and the royal government on one side and Tito on the other. Since there was no other way for Tito to secure legitimacy for his movement on the international scene but to reach some kind of agreement with the royal government, he accepted Churchill's initiative. However, he firmly refused to negotiate with the King and in February 1944 suggested that the royal government be represented by Ivan Šubašić, the governor of Croatia according to the agreement of 1939 and a professed sympathizer of the Partisan movement.¹⁰ Their talks began in June 1944 on the British controlled island of Vis, but the outcome was not a joint government of the Tito's movement and the royal government; instead, two of Tito's representatives were included in the latter. Two parties agreed on the common principles of action, each in its own sphere of activity. By this agreement, all Tito's units and institutions were recognized by the royal government represented by Šubašić, while the Partisans acknowledged the King's authority, but under the conditions stipulated at the Second Session of the AVNOJ.¹¹

war enable it to become a valuable ally for the Soviet Union. The said Stalin's strategy was based on two variants of Popular Front. The initial explained above, or as it was called the Popular front from above, was supplanted in 1939 after Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, with the so-called, Popular Front from below, which saw the Communists as the only organized political force in the Front, all other political parties and forces had to be excluded. The second variant, which was in fact a sort of a program of communist revolution, was Tito's *credo* during the war and afterwards in communist Yugoslavia.

¹⁰ Fitzroy McLean to Anthony Eden, 2 March 1944 in D. Biber, *Tito Čerčil – strogo tajno* (Zagreb: Globus, 1981), 97.

¹¹ The Assembly of AVNOJ, composed exclusively of communists and their sympathizers, decided to forbid the return of the King in Yugoslavia pending the decision on the fate of the

Tito's movement became the only legitimate authority in the country, while Šubašić's government, now enlarged by the two members appointed by Tito, was tasked with representing Yugoslavia in foreign relations.¹² Thus, Tito accepted a compromise in order to gain international recognition for his movement, but also blocked any influence of Šubašić's government and the Allies themselves on events in the country.

The beginnings of Tito's wartime diplomacy were based on attempts to hide the communist character of the Partisan movement from the Anglo-American allies, while simultaneously continuing with the practice of regularly reporting to Moscow. In August 1944, during his talks with Churchill in Caserta, Tito declared he had no intention of introducing Communism in Yugoslavia. In late August, he repeated this statement to Robert Murphy, the American diplomatic representative in the Mediterranean area, during his private visit to the island of Vis on August 31st 1944.¹³ At the same time, Tito was informing Stalin about his decisions and contacts with the other Allies. With Moscow's support, Tito withstood Churchill's pressure to form a joint government with Šubašić's; thus, he effectively removed all grounds for the royal government to influence events in the country.¹⁴ Tito's priority was to achieve victory in the civil war and seize power in Serbia, the key region in Yugoslavia, so a joint government would have only made the realization of his strategy more difficult.¹⁵ After nine months of diplomatic efforts, in September 1944, Churchill was forced to accept that his Yugoslav policy had failed, as Tito left Vis without informing him and flew to Moscow, while continuing his offensive on Serbia.

Moscow's active support and the imminent arrival of the Red Army in Yugoslavia had renewed the Partisans' confidence. The liberation of Belgrade in October 1944 by Soviet troops with the modest help of the Partisans definitely consolidated the power of Tito and his movement in Yugoslavia. After three years of struggle, all conditions required for the political takeover of the CPY had finally been fulfilled. The Red Army had allowed units under Tito's command to defeat the forces of the royalist Yugoslav Army in Homeland in Serbia and finally emerge victorious from the civil war. Owing to the support of Soviet troops, a front in the modern sense of the word was created in Yugoslavia – the Sarmian front. In the background of the front, the first territory controlled by Tito's forces was established and managed to withstand German assaults, as opposed to all previous "liberated areas" from the "Republic of Užice" (1941) on-

Monarchy, which was supposed to be taken on the occasion of the elections in the liberated Yugoslavia.

¹² Murphy to Cordell Hull, Caserta, 30 August 1944, *FRUS* 1944, IV, 1402, 1403.

¹³ Murphy to James Cannon, Washington, 8 September 1944, *FRUS* 1944, IV, 1403, 1404.

¹⁴ Henry Maxwell, the Deputy Chief of the British military mission, transmitted the message of the Foreign Office to Tito; Vis, 13 September 1944; (Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, hereafter AJ), KMJ, I-3-b/890.

¹⁵ Tito to Maxwell, Vis, 16 September 16 1944; *Ibid.*

ward, which had fallen as soon as the Germans decided to attack. It was on this liberated territory that the last stage of the civil war begun in 1941 took place – the forceful takeover of power. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia, with Tito at its helm, could within the Soviet sphere of interest freely impose the state order it had always wanted and start leading a foreign policy aimed at justifying and defending the political order of the second, communist Yugoslavia. The realization of their political program had given immense confidence to Tito and his Partisans, as well as an almost metaphysical certainty that their political views were justified. The victory in the civil war won with the help of the Soviets led to a change of tone in the communication with the Western Allies. In October 1944, Tito and the Partisans started demanding that relations with Great Britain and the US be established on the state level within the framework of the Allied coalition. They considered their movement (and the state which had emerged from it) to be one of the key allies, as they believed that the victims they had suffered had given them the moral right to realize the program adopted at the AVNOJ in 1943 – international recognition and territorial expansion.

Hence, the talks between Tito and Šubašić, which were resumed after the liberation of Belgrade, went on in an entirely different tone. The former Croatian governor represented the royal government and enjoyed the support of the British Prime Minister; the latter, however, no longer had any means of influencing the events in Yugoslavia. Tito commanded the army and the state administration was entirely controlled by the CPY; hence, he was able to dictate to Šubašić the positions that the new government would take and to impose the institution of the King's regents on him, as well as their names. Despite the personal dissatisfaction of the British Prime Minister with Tito's acts, his Cabinet advised the King Peter II and Šubašić to accept his conditions, as it felt they had no other choice. The modalities of the new agreement were formulated during the talks between Tito and Šubašić in December 1944 and received Allied support at the Yalta Conference. The Yugoslav sovereign opposed the agreement which effectively stripped him of power until February 1945, when he too had no choice but to accept it in principle. The King's attempt to personally choose the regents who would represent him in Yugoslavia failed, because the regents were appointed in accordance with the agreement between Tito and the Šubašić's government. The new government was formed on March 7th 1945, with Tito as its Prime Minister and Šubašić as its Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thus, Tito's movement achieved international recognition without deviating from its political program. The Anglo-American Allies expressed their objections to the undemocratic character of the new government in notes sent to the government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY), but nonetheless accepted to accredit their ambassadors with the regents and the provisional government of the DFY.

This, however, was not the end of the process of establishing the new regime, as it lacked the legitimacy that only post-war elections could provide.

The agreement with Šubašić had stipulated that Tito and the CPY had the obligation to organize elections for the constitutional assembly; they also had to acknowledge the counsels of the Crimea Conference to expand the AVNOJ to include the members of the National Assembly elected at the elections of 1938. However, in its capacity of provisional representational body, the AVNOJ passed a series of laws which made the authority of the provisional government untouchable, while the CPY used its security agencies to inspire such terror that it was impossible to organize any opposition to Tito's regime. Already in the summer of 1945, the members of the former royal government informed the American and British diplomatic envoys that any political action of theirs was entirely stifled and that they feared for their own lives and the lives of their sympathizers. Entirely independently and ignoring the stipulations of the Tito-Šubašić agreement, the provisional government formed the cabinets in charge of the six federal units. The manner in which the AVNOJ was expanded was another indication that Tito and the CPY would not tolerate any kind of opposition. The law on the electoral process had given all competence for the organization of the elections to the Popular Front – that is to say the CPY – because only the Popular Front had authority to decide who could vote and who could be elected. The criterion was always the same – collaboration with the enemy during the war – which did not need to be proven as long as the representatives of the People's Front thought someone guilty of it. In August 1945, Tito even publicly declared that the introduction of multi-party democracy was redundant, as the people had already achieved the type of democracy most suited to its needs. He also said that the rule of the people was not compatible with the monarchy and that the Popular Front must fight for the introduction of the republican system. On August 19th, the representative of the Democratic Party Milan Grol resigned from the Tito's cabinet, followed by Šubašić and his colleague from the Croatian Peasant Party Josip Šutej in October 1945.

On October 18th, the American ambassador Richard Patterson verbally communicated the position of the American administration to Tito, stating that the November elections could not be considered free or fair because of police pressure and the lack of freedom of speech and public congregation. On November 17th, after obtaining the landslide victory at the elections, Tito replied and denied all American complaints:

“In the name of my government and on the grounds of the above statements, I declare that we consider all our obligations fulfilled and the Allied governments freed from the obligations they might consider to have towards the peoples of Yugoslavia. This is best illustrated by the results of the elections held on November 11th, when the people – entirely of its free will and in great majority – expressed its faith in the People's Front and the government over which I have the honor of presiding”.¹⁶

¹⁶ The response of Broz to the American note of November 6th in the telegram sent from Patterson to Burns; Belgrade, 19 November 1945, *FRUS* 1945, V, 1286, 1287.

By his response, Tito let the Anglo-American allies know that he considered the November 11th elections had given his government complete legality and legitimacy and that any further interference in Yugoslavia's affairs on the basis of the wartime agreement would be unnecessary and futile. In December 1945, the American and British governments recognized the government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Having finally achieved international recognition, Tito's movement was free to devote all its attention to the second part of the program adopted at 1943 AVNOJ – territorial expansion. On 30 November 1943, the Presidium of the AVNOJ had passed the decision about the annexation of Italian province of Venezia Giulia, Istria and other Croatian-inhabited islands to the Yugoslav federation.¹⁷

Territorial ambitions

The territorial ambitions of Tito were based on the ethnic principle, the contribution of Partisans to the struggle against the Germany and Italy within the Allied coalition, and the revolutionary solidarity among Communist movements in the Balkans. The common denominator for all three of these grounds was the endeavor to expand the territorial scope of the country Tito intended to lead as much as possible. Despite its revolutionary character, Tito's movement in fact adopted all territorial demands of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; however, they were no longer considered imperialistic or oppressive, but were deemed an expression of the right to self-determination of the peoples which had chosen to join the Yugoslav federation proclaimed by AVNOJ in 1943. Thus, on the basis of their right to self-determination and the activity of the Partisan detachments present even in the vicinity of Trieste, the Slovenes and Croats reasoned, they had every right to demand that all territories of pre-war Italy east of the river Soča (Isonzo) be annexed to the second Yugoslavia.

The Macedonian Slavs were also guaranteed the right of self-determination, but it went without saying that they would – under the leadership of the CPY – use it to unite the three parts of Macedonia (Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Greek) into a single federal unit which would, in turn, become a part of the Yugoslav federation. Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo was entrusted with this task and sent to Macedonia as the envoy of Tito's Supreme Command. In early 1944, the Bulgarian communists received orders from their secretary-general Georgi Dimitrov – i.e. from the Soviet leadership in Moscow – not to resist Tito's intentions and not propagate the formation of an independent Macedonia outside the borders of Tito's Yugoslavia. It was Tito's idea to include Bulgaria itself as a federal unit in the Yugoslav federation, in order to prevent Sofia from perceiving the annexation of Pirin (Bulgarian) Macedonia to Yugoslavia

¹⁷ The decisions of the Presidium of the AVNOJ, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici SFRJ*, II (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1989), 24-25.

as a territorial loss, but as a change of borders within a single socialist federation. In December 1944, Edvard Kardelj, Tito's closest associate, traveled to Sofia to negotiate with Bulgarian comrades their possible entry in the Yugoslav federation.¹⁸

Kosovo and Metohija and the problem of relations with Albania proved particularly challenging for Tito's policy of self-determination. At the Bujan Conference in 1943, all Albanian communists and some CPY instructors (such as Milutin Popović) sent to Albania opted for the annexation of Kosovo and Metohija to Albania. Tito was repeatedly forced to insist that the condition for the realization of the policy of self-determination was the struggle against the foreign troops in Yugoslavia. This condition was not easy to fulfill in Kosovo and Metohija because the Albanian population thought that its national objective had already been realized during the Italian occupation, when this region had been annexed to the Italian occupational zone in Albania. The Yugoslav communist federation – now tending to become a Balkan one – was the solution that Tito had offered to Albanians on both sides of the border. Tito's movement was giving all available material, ideological and logistic help to the Albanian Communist party and the Albanian resistance movement, hoping that – as Tito stated as early as January 1944 – the Albanians would agree to join the federation headed by himself in order to create a single, powerful, large Balkan country comprised of peoples enjoying equal rights.¹⁹

The territorial pretensions of Tito's movement included Carinthia, because – as Tito told the Slovenian people in April 1944, on the third anniversary of the Liberation Front of the Slovene People (OF) – their brethren in Carinthia had to be united with Slovenia within the Yugoslav federation.²⁰ Thus, already during the war Tito was making plans and preparing the ground for the formation of a federal Yugoslavia from Soča and Carinthia in the West to the Albanian coast and the Black Sea on the East. During his visit to the USSR in September 1944, he received Soviet support for this project. Stalin supported the strongest resistance movement in its intention to become the cornerstone of the Soviet-controlled Balkans.²¹ But, the Soviet support had its limits – the USSR would not allow Tito's territorial ambitions to provoke disagreements with the American and British governments. However, Tito and his movement – entirely convinced that the ethnic principle and the losses suffered in the struggle against the Germans and Italians entitle them to draw

¹⁸ Kardelj to Tito, Sofia, 24 December 1944; AJ, 836, I-3-b/109.

¹⁹ D. T. Bataković, *Serbia's Kosovo Drama. A Historical Perspective* (Belgrade: Čigoja Press, 2012), 97-103.

²⁰ Tito to the people of Slovenia, Drvar, 24 April 1944, J.B. Tito, *Sabrana dela* (Belgrade: Izdavački centar Komunist, 1984), XX, 22.

²¹ Leonid Gibianskii, "Federative Projects of the Balkan Communists and the USSR Policy during Second World War and at the Beginning of the Cold War", in V. G. Pavlović, ed., *The Balkans in the Cold War* (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2012), 52

the Balkan borders on their own – did not shy away from coming into conflict with the Western allies. The American and British governments quickly realized the aggressive nature of Tito's movement, which was a product of a particular mixture of ideological Messianism and the confidence of an autochthonous resistance movement. Already in May 1945, in a letter to his Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Churchill commented on Tito's territorial pretensions, mentioning his metaphor of the iron curtain coming down on Europe, which had yet to become famous. Within the framework of this image, Tito's movement was given a prominent role, as Churchill was convinced that Tito would demand all territories east of Soča.²² So, it was with Cold War logic that the British Prime Minister reasoned when he thought of the territorial pretensions of Tito; he would keep in line with it during his efforts to limit the expansion of Tito's communist movement and Soviet influence in general towards the West.

Tito's Fourth Army was created on March 2nd 1945 and tasked with liberating the Croatian coast and Istria and reaching Trieste before the Anglo-American allies. The advance of Tito's movement in the first days of May led it into direct conflict with the British troops stationed in the vicinity of Trieste. Tito consciously ignored all agreements he had previously made with the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, the British field marshal Alexander. Hence, the Western allies – in the case of Tito's Yugoslavia, for the first time – decided to prevent any further advance of their recent ally towards the West, even if it led to armed conflict. By applying his aggressive policy, Tito managed to inaugurate the first – albeit limited and regional – confrontation between the East and the West, using the same logic which will be the hallmark of post-war history of Europe. On May 10th 1945, Joseph Grew, the US Undersecretary of State, in a memorandum for the new American president Harry Truman, commented on the advance of Tito's Fourth Army: "At the time when we have finally won the military battle on Europe and have millions of men under arms on that continent, we must decide whether we shall accept that the future borders of Western Europe be decided on the basis of one-sided acts of aggression."²³ President Truman's reaction was clear: "If Tito should refuse to accept the Allied control over this region (as defined by Alexander), the Field Marshal Alexander should be instructed to use all means, including force."²⁴

Defending Italy's territorial integrity, the British forces stopped the advance of Tito's Partisans in the suburbs of Trieste and established their own rule in the city itself. Truman had to intervene with Stalin to get Tito to ac-

²² Churchill to Eden, London, May 4th 1945, The National Archives, Public Records Office, PREM 3 495/1.

²³ Grew's memorandum to Truman, Washington, 10 May 1945; series, National Archives in Washington (NAW), series, 740.00119 CONTROL (ITALY) /5-1045 group 59.

²⁴ Truman's letter to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, 11 May 1945, NAW, series, 740.00119 CONTROL (ITALY) /6-1045 group 59.

cept an agreement on June 9th 1945 – the Venezia Giulia was divided into two zones: the Western one under the control of the Allies (including Pola and Trieste) and the Eastern, Yugoslav zone.²⁵

The Western allies also had to consider Tito's demand of April 2nd 1945 to have its own occupational zone in Austria, where his units had already been operating for a while, as he had promised to the OF. The Soviets had already unilaterally allowed Tito to keep his units in their occupational zone in Austria. The British, however, staunchly refused to accept the presence of Tito's units in Austria, precisely because his movement had expressed territorial pretensions over Carinthia. The participation of Tito's units in the occupation of Carinthia could have altered the fate of this region that could only be decided at the peace conference. Due to the firm position of the British government, Tito had no choice but to pull back and move his units over the Yugoslav-Austrian border established in 1937.²⁶

With his aggressive policy of territorial expansion, Tito not only forced the Western allies to act in accordance with Cold War logic, but in time also started provoking the dissatisfaction of his Soviet protector. Every time when there was a chance that Yugoslavia could cause disagreements between the USSR and the Western allies, Stalin was forced to pacify Tito. The project of Bulgaria's inclusion in the Yugoslav federation – the reason for Kardelj's visit to Sofia – was aborted in January 1945 at the request of the British government. Churchill was not sympathetic to the idea of Tito's influence spilling over into Bulgaria, and before the peace agreement with Bulgaria the Soviets had been unable to sanction any kind of Yugoslav independent initiative, as it could be used as a precedent for future peace agreements with Germany and Italy. Stalin advised Andrija Hebrang, the Minister of Economy in the provisional Yugoslav government who was in Moscow in January 1945, that for the time being it would be better to settle for an agreement on mutual aid with Bulgaria instead of pushing for a federation. On the same occasion, he let Hebrang know that he thought a dualist solution for the relations between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria more suitable than a federal one.²⁷ Seeing that due to the opposition from London and Stalin's reservations there was no chance for Bulgaria to join the Yugoslav federation, Tito lost interest in this project. He was much more interested in the annexation of Pirin (Bulgarian) Macedonia to Yugoslav Macedonia, and received Stalin's support for this idea during his visit to Moscow in May and June 1946. The Bulgarian comrades side, however, were more than reserved towards this option and they did not even acknowledge the existence of Mace-

²⁵ The text of the agreement signed in Belgrade on June 9th 1945 in the letter of the chargé d'affaires Harold Shantz, Grew, Belgrade, 18 June 1945, NAW, series, 740.00119 CONTROL (ITALY) /6-1845 group 59.

²⁶ Tito's note to the British ambassador Ralph Stevenson, Belgrade, May 13th 1945; Stevenson's reply, Belgrade, 17 May 1945; Tito's reply, Belgrade, 19 May 1945; AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/905.

²⁷ Hebrang to Tito, Moscow, 2 January 1945, AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/586.

donian minority in the constitution passed in 1946. Eventually, the idea of establishing an institutional link between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria ceased to be a political project and became more of a propaganda slogan, most exploited by Georgi Dimitrov.²⁸

Tito had much more success in establishing an institutional link with Albania. An agreement on economic cooperation was signed in July, followed by an agreement on synchronizing economic plans, monetary policy and import taxes in November 1946. Within the framework of the Soviet bloc, Tito and Yugoslavia were in charge of relations with Albania. During his talks with Stalin in May 1946, Tito mentioned the possibility of including Albania in the Yugoslav federation, but Stalin was unconvinced. He thought that Yugoslavia must first solve the problem of Trieste.²⁹ The envisaged institutional link-up between Yugoslavia and Albania was intended to solve the problem of Kosovo and Metohija. In April 1947, Kardelj told Stalin in Moscow that the Yugoslav leadership had plans to give control over this region to Albania after the establishment of closer institutional links between the two countries.³⁰ To Tito, the aspect of military cooperation with Albania was particularly important, especially in view of the civil war in Greece. There were Yugoslav instructors in the Albanian army, and Yugoslavia was helping its organization in material and arms. The next step in this military cooperation was the project of setting up a Yugoslav military base in the vicinity of the city of Korçë to provide support to Albania in the event of Greek military provocations.³¹ Tito in fact felt that the more than substantial funding Yugoslavia had provided to Albania – 340 million dinars as military aid only – would only be a sensible investment if Albania were to be integrated into the Yugoslav system of defense; that was also the light in which he considered the possibility of sending one division to the base at Korçë. Otherwise, in the case of a Greek attack across Albania, southern Macedonia would find itself at risk, as the Albanian army was entirely unprepared to answer such a challenge. Also, Tito threatened to withdraw military and economic aid to Albania unless she accepted the possibility of including its territory into the Yugoslav defense system.³²

The military cooperation between Yugoslavia and Albania was going on without consultations with the Soviets, who were not informed about the project of setting up a Yugoslav base at Korçë. In January 1948, the Albanian communist leader Enver Hoxha first agreed to this project and then informed

²⁸ Gibianskii, "Federative Projects of the Balkan Communists", 55-56.

²⁹ Proceedings of Stalin's talks with Tito, Moscow, 27 May 1946, Collection of documents: *Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi 1945-1956* (Belgrade: The Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010), 109

³⁰ Proceedings of Stalin's talks with Kardelj, Moscow, 19 April 1947, *Ibid.*, 181

³¹ M. Pavlović, "Albania between Tito and Stalin" in: V. G. Pavlović, *The Balkans in the Cold War*, 165.

³² Tito to Kardelj, Djilas and Bakarić; Belgrade, 13 February 1948, AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/650.

the Soviets about it.³³ The Soviet reaction was more than negative. Molotov issued an official protest via his ambassador in Belgrade, as Yugoslavia was obliged to inform Moscow of projects such as this by the stipulations of the agreement on their alliance. Stalin summoned Tito to Moscow for talks, but Tito sent instead members of his Politburo, Milovan Djilas, Edvard Kardelj and Vladimir Bakarić. Bulgarian leaders came also to discuss the situation in the Balkans. At the meeting held in Moscow on February 11th 1948, after three years of continued Yugoslav territorial demands, Stalin and his associates finally decided that they are damaging to Soviet interests and, more importantly, that Moscow had neither control over nor insight into Yugoslav initiatives. The Yugoslav aggressive policy could have had dire consequences: the Western allies could have interpreted the arrival of Yugoslav forces as an opportunity to interfere in Albania, thereby creating another zone of conflict in the Balkans.

Tito's territorial pretensions had led him into disagreement first with the Western allies and then with the USSR as well. Just like he thought he was entitled to demand that all territories east of Soča River be annexed to Yugoslavia, Tito thought that he could disobey the demands Stalin had communicated to Yugoslav leaders at the meeting in Moscow on February 11th 1948. Also, at the meeting of the Politburo on March 1st 1948, Tito refused Stalin's suggestion of a two-partite federation with Bulgaria, because he judged that it could serve as a way for the Soviet security services to control Yugoslavia with the help of Bulgarian communists. He did not agree to abandon his policy of economic and military control over Albania. In a word, for the first time ever, Tito and his Politburo refused to enact Stalin's directives.³⁴ When Sreten Žujović, himself a member of the Yugoslav Politburo, informed unofficially the Soviet ambassador of these conclusions who then forwarded them to Moscow, the Soviet leadership concluded that Tito was no longer pursuing a common policy in the Balkans, having abandoned it for his own. Tito even refused to accept Stalin's call to order which was in itself an open challenge to the leading role of the USSR among the people's democracies. Therefore on March 27th 1948 the Central Committee of the CP of USSR sent a letter to the Yugoslav communists informing them of their excommunication.³⁵ By Stalin's decision – first formulated in the letters of the Central Committee of the USSR to the CPY and then in the conclusions of the Cominform (Comintern's successor) Tito and his associates were expelled from the communist bloc and denounced as collaborators with the imperialists.

³³ M. Pavlović, "Albania between Tito and Stalin", 166.

³⁴ Proceedings from the session of the Politburo of the CPY, Belgrade, 1 March 1948, *Zbornik dokumenata*, 260-264.

³⁵ L. Gibianski, "Sovjetsko-jugoslovenski sukob 1948: istoriografske verzije i novi arhivski izvori" in: J. Fisher, A. Gabrić, L. Gibianskii, E.S.Klein, R. W. Preussen, eds., *Jugoslavija v hladnoj vojni* (Ljubljana: Institut za novejšo zgodovino & University of Toronto, 2004), 42-44.

Less than three years after the war had ended, Tito's uncompromising foreign policy had led him to the excommunication from the Soviet-controlled bloc of states and to the verge of conflict with the Western allies. The territorial conflict in the Venezia Giulia was only an episode in Tito's aggressive policy toward his recent allies. In summer 1946, the Yugoslav anti-air defense brought down an American cargo aircraft which had been flying over Yugoslav without its permission. Pursuing his Cold War logic, Tito refused the aid supplied by UNRRA because he wouldn't allow its representatives to distribute it in Yugoslavia. He also refused the aid of the Western powers within the framework of the Marshall Plan, reasoning that this too would also represent an unacceptable interference in the interior affairs of Yugoslavia.

The ambitious and independent regional policy of Tito's Yugoslavia, however, did not originate from an ideological conflict with the USSR – quite the opposite. On the ideological level, the Yugoslav communists were completely in accord with the views of their Soviet comrades. They were the most ardent advocates of creating a new forum for the cooperation between communist parties. The Cominform was created owing to the efforts of (among others) the Yugoslav representatives Kardelj and Djilas at the founding session held in September 1947 in Poland. On that occasion, they enthusiastically accepted the Soviet suggestion that its headquarters be set up in Belgrade. There is no doubt that Tito was Stalin's most loyal ideological disciple, but also the only one who considered himself entitled to his own initiatives in matters of foreign policy. It was Tito's misunderstanding of Yugoslavia's position in the Eastern bloc that led to the break in state and party relations with the USSR in June 1948. The confidence he acquired during the civil war he had fought outside of Stalin's direct control, led Tito to disregard the experiences he had accumulated while residing in Moscow in the 1930s. The leading role of Stalin and the CPSU did not allow any sort of independent policy within the Eastern bloc.³⁶

Conflict: 1948-1956

In 1948, Tito and the CPY, but also the Yugoslavia they ruled, found themselves in an extremely difficult international position. The West thought them orthodox Stalinists who had created the first two hotspots of the Cold War – Trieste and the civil war in Greece; the Soviets, in turn, considered them revisionists and traitors of Communism. Tito had been following the Cold War logic ever since the Session of the AVNOJ in November 1943; less than five years later, he had brought it to paroxysm. In Yugoslavia, the Cold War began much earlier than anywhere else in Europe but also ended drastically earlier – in June 1948 with the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Soviet fold.

³⁶ D. T. Bataković, *Yugoslavie. Nations, religions, idéologies* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1994), 236-243.

His confidence – which at times made him blinded by his own importance – had led Tito and his movement to the very outskirts of the bloc division. They were forced to defend their independence and communist ideology in the face of Western economic pressure, but also the ideological and military pressure of the East. In the bipolar world of the Cold War, Yugoslavia was no longer part of either bloc. It could not be a member of the Eastern bloc anymore and because of its communist regime did not want to become a part of the Western alliance. The Cold War logic was no longer of use to Tito's Yugoslavia, as in the following period its foreign policy had to be based on an innovative concept of cooperation with both blocs. The process of learning and adapting to the new orientation of its foreign policy marked the period of its conflict with the USSR from 1948 to 1956.

The gradual disruption of all relations with the USSR and the Eastern bloc caused a series of problems. Incidents on the eastern borders of Yugoslavia were symptoms of the military pressure, while the ideological conflict manifested itself in the periodic denunciations by the Cominform. Among Yugoslav leaders, Tito was the most enthusiastic advocate of a policy meant to deny the Soviet accusations that Yugoslavia had joined the camp of the enemies of Marxism and Leninism. In March 1949, more than six months after the excommunication, at a meeting of the Politburo Tito suggested that Moscow be asked for advice on how to act in the event of a Greek attack on Albania.³⁷ Tito did not want the conflict with the USSR to get an international dimension, because, as he said: "We must not allow the materialists to take advantage of our dispute with the USSR; we shall follow our own revolutionary course." In August 1949, he refused Western offers of supplying arms to Yugoslavia.³⁸ His conclusion was that Yugoslavia „should not do what would not be to the liking of the Soviet people and the progressive public in the world." In practice, that meant that the Yugoslav diplomacy should apply for non-permanent membership in the Security Council, but not bring up the conflict with the USSR within that institution.³⁹ However, in his speech before the UN General Assembly in September 1949, Kardelj warned the USSR and other East European countries that they must back up their pacifist policy with deeds in relations with Yugoslavia. He drew the attention of the global public to the fact that the USSR and its allies were keeping Yugoslavia under an economic embargo, spreading enemy propaganda and openly threatening it with military force.⁴⁰

The change in the attitude of the Yugoslav leadership occurred in September 1949, after the trial of Laszlo Rajk, the Hungarian Minister of Interior Affairs and later Foreign Affairs as well. The charges brought against Rajk were in fact leveled at the Yugoslav leadership. The Soviets responded to the interna-

³⁷ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 22 March 1949, AJ, 507-40.

³⁸ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 30 August 1949, AJ, 507-42.

³⁹ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 7 September 1949, AJ, 507-43.

⁴⁰ D. Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988), 84-85.

tionalization of the Tito-Stalin split by annulling the agreement of friendship with Yugoslavia, expelling its ambassador from Moscow and finally breaking all political, economic and cultural ties with Belgrade. The Soviet example was followed by all other members of the Eastern bloc. At the same time, the deterioration of relations between Belgrade and Moscow helped Yugoslavia gain the support of the West for its non-permanent membership in the Security Council. In October 1949, Yugoslavia was made a temporary member of the UN Security Council with a two-year mandate.

The threats voiced at the meeting of the Cominform in Hungary in November 1949 even suggested the possibility of a military conflict between the Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia. The escalation of the conflict inspired the Yugoslav communists to respond on the ideological level for the first time. In December 1949, in an interview with the French journalist Louis Dalmas Tito stated that the aggressive campaign of the USSR and its allies against Yugoslavia was a consequence of ideological revisionism and the deviation of the Eastern bloc from Marxism-Leninism. In late December 1949, at the Third Plenum of the CPY Central Committee, Kardelj announced the new strategy of Yugoslav foreign policy. He advocated a balanced approach to all capitalist countries, a more "flexible" attitude towards former enemies Italy and Greece, and the lowering of the tone of anti-capitalist propaganda. His speech was met with complete silence from the audience, but – in a typically communist manner – received unanimous support because Tito was in its favor.⁴¹

The end of 1949 was marked by a turnaround in Yugoslav foreign policy, which had in fact occurred more than a year after the resolution of the Cominform. The decision to finally confront Moscow openly and publicly on the international scene but also to emphasize the ideological distinctiveness of Yugoslav communism was made gradually. It was during this period that the basic principles of Tito's foreign policy strategies emerged – the very principles which he would not deviate from until the end of his days. In matters of foreign policy, Tito was governed by a few principles; the first and most important was to never allow the international and „progressive" public to come under the impression that he personally or Yugoslavia had been the instigators of the political and ideological break with the USSR. It was particularly important to him that the ideological orthodoxy of the revolution he had led should never come into question, but also to avoid such acts as could give rise to the accusations that he had caused dissention in the global communist movement. The image of the Yugoslav communists in the global working-class movement mattered to him as much as the position of Yugoslavia on the international stage.

This axiom of his foreign policy – especially in the first years following the resolution of the Cominform – had made the Yugoslav foreign policy

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

dependent on Moscow's moves. As it has already been stated, the conflict became open after the charges against Laszlo Rajk were revealed. Only in June 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean War had convinced him that the threat of a direct Soviet attack had passed, at a session of the Politburo Tito suggested that the Yugoslav communists launch an action among the progressive forces of the world (i.e. communists and socialists) to dismantle the aggressive revisionist campaign of the USSR and its satellites.⁴² Tito made the decision to ask the West to supply him with arms in December 1950, after the Chinese army stepped into the Korean conflict and beat the US forces to the ground. The defeat of the West in Korea also weakened the position of Yugoslavia, and in December 1950 it once again found itself convinced of the threat of a direct attack from the East.⁴³ After Stalin's death, the party and state relations with the USSR were resumed at the initiative of the Soviet communist party. The fact that Tito let the Soviets take initiative was at first a consequence of not grasping the situation and later of the Yugoslav wish to present the conflict as a result of a Soviet error which it was up to the USSR to rectify. Tito's efforts not to provide the Soviets with grounds to accuse him of deepening the conflict were as much a tactic of his as a reflection of his belief that the conflict was unnatural. Tito avoided intensifying the conflict, sincerely believing that it could weaken the communist movement. He resorted to open conflict only when he thought that Yugoslavia had come under threat of Soviet aggression.

However, despite the fact that in this period (1950-1956) Yugoslavia had been entirely dependent on Western economic and military aid, Tito never hesitated to publicly denounce the „unacceptable” policy of the West towards Yugoslavia. During a session of the Politburo in February 1950, he condemned the rumors about Western aid to Yugoslavia, which was not receiving any funding at that time. Tito repeated this at a meeting held in the town of Užice.⁴⁴ The signing of the Ankara agreement with Greece and Turkey in February 1953 did not cause any fundamental changes in Tito's position, although this agreement brought Yugoslavia to the verge of joining the Western military alliance. During the crisis of Trieste in the fall of 1953, he allowed the demolition of Western embassies in Belgrade, and he was also ready to resort to armed conflict.⁴⁵ In situations such as these, it seemed that he acted with more ease and spontaneity on the international stage than in his disputes with the Soviets. The moderate position towards the USSR was no doubt a consequence of ideological similarities which did not disappear in spite of obvious ideological differences in the period 1950-1956. The ideological evolution of

⁴² Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 28 June 1950, AJ, 507-48.

⁴³ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 14 December 1950, AJ, 507-49.

⁴⁴ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 14 February 1950, AJ, 507-49.

⁴⁵ N. Troha, "Yugoslav Proposals for the Solution of the Trieste Question", in Fisher, Gabrič, Gibianskii, Klein, W. Preussen, *Jugoslavija v hladnoj vojni*, 175-178.

CPY at the Sixth Congress (1952) i.e. self-government and the transformation of commanding into leading role of the party,⁴⁶ including Djilas's attempt to begin the democratization of the party (fall and winter 1953), was only a passing orientation of Tito's in which he became disinterested when Stalin's death removed the threat of immediate Soviet aggression. The removal from office of Milovan Djilas was even one of the conditions posed by Moscow for the start of the normalization of relations.⁴⁷ As a trained agent of the Comintern, Tito could not regard the USSR and the West equally, just as he could not allow the democratization which would have put his personal position at risk. It was precisely the Comintern-type party that allowed Tito to always have the final word in matters of foreign policy. Tito used it in his own special, sophisticated way – by allowing his closest associates to create the public impression that they were the initiators of the ideologically and politically risky policy of opening towards the West.

The second principle of Tito's foreign policy in this period was to generally avoid appearing in public as the protagonist of the policy of cooperation with the West. When due to Soviet threats Yugoslavia had no choice but to bring the attention of the global public to the conflict, Tito let Kardelj do it at the session of the UN General Assembly in September 1949. In September 1949, before the eyes of both the international and Yugoslav public, Kardelj assumed responsibility for the new orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy. On this occasion, as on many others, Tito stayed in the background, leaving himself enough maneuvering space to later disavow Kardelj or anyone else. In Yugoslavia, it was Koča Popović – Tito's new Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed in 1953 – who was considered the architect of the Balkan Pact (Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece) established at Bled in August 1954.⁴⁸ There is no doubt, however, that foreign policy had always been Tito's domain and that he controlled it entirely. The difference compared to the policy towards the Soviets was that in relations with the West Tito allowed some of his associates' initiatives to come to life. Thus, he always had the option of distancing himself from them if need be and to pin all responsibility on his associates; in fact, throughout the period of direct cooperation with the West, Tito never personally felt comfortable. Furthermore, Tito defended the independence of Yugoslavia very aggressively and diligently in public, but in diplomatic contacts he insisted on the Western Powers' political – and later economic – support. The other Yugoslav communists also took great care not to appear subject to Western pressure, but Tito's role in this matter was special – at the least indication of a potential normaliza-

⁴⁶ The Yugoslav Communist Party changed its name at its Sixth Congress and became League of Communist of Yugoslavia.

⁴⁷ A. Edemskii, "The Role of Milovan Djilas in Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 1944–1954", in: V. G. Pavlović, *The Balkans in the Cold War*, 209, 216–219.

⁴⁸ R. Petković, *Subjektivna istorija jugoslovenske diplomatije 1943–1991* (Belgrade : Službeni list SRJ, 1995), 42.

tion of relations with Moscow, he limited the cooperation with the US, France and Great Britain.

The watershed in Yugoslav foreign policy occurred following Stalin's death, with the removal of the direct threat of Soviet aggression towards Yugoslavia. The Ankara Agreements⁴⁹ – the only institutional Western guarantee of Yugoslavia's territorial integrity – proved to be redundant only a few days after it had been signed: it was signed on February 28th and Stalin died on March 5th 1953⁵⁰. The survival of Yugoslavia was no longer dependent on the shipments of Western armaments; the resumed – although at first very limited – contacts with Moscow would henceforth also play a part. The normalization of relations with Moscow began in the summer of 1953 by elevating the status of its diplomatic envoy to ambassador. It is impossible to fully comprehend the Trieste crisis (1953) and the extremely aggressive Yugoslav policy towards Italy without taking into account the opened (albeit very slow) process of normalizing the relations with Moscow. The gradual normalization of state and party relations – inaugurated by Nikita Khrushchev's letter of June 1954 – allowed Tito's foreign policy to start positioning itself anew on the international stage.

The Belgrade and Moscow declarations (1955 and 1956) ended the process of normalization of relations with USSR both on the state and party level; however, they also showed that Yugoslavia had no intention to return under the wing of the Soviet bloc. During his stay in Moscow in June 1956, Tito officially refused the invitation for Yugoslavia to become a member of an organization of socialist states and parties, which the Soviet leadership with Khrushchev at its helm planned to establish based on the model of the Comintern and Cominform.⁵¹ However, only a few months later, Tito agreed to the Soviet intervention in Hungary. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 showed that the Yugoslav foreign policy under Tito's leadership had clearly retained its ideological characteristic. During Khrushchev's unexpected visit to Brioni islands in November 1956, Tito sanctioned the Soviet intervention, saying that an intervention was unavoidable if a counter-revolution was happening in Hungary.⁵² For Tito, proof enough that there was a counter-revolution going on in Hungary was the introduction of a multi-party system. Concern for the preservation of the communist political order was the foundation of all Tito's political activity, including his foreign policy. Hence, if it was based on ideological solidarity, the claim about the equidistance of Tito's foreign policy

⁴⁹ The Ankara Agreements between Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece, were conclude on Yugoslav demand as means of assuring cooperation in the case of Soviet attack. It was the base for effective military collaboration between Yugoslavia and two NATO member states.

⁵⁰ D. Bekić, "Balkanski pakt: Mrtvorodjenče hladnog rata", in: Fisher, Gabrič, Gibianskii, Klein, Preussen, *Jugoslavija v hladnoj vojni*, 122-123.

⁵¹ D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956-1961* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2006), 56-58.

⁵² Lj. Dimić, "Josip Broz, Nikita Sergejevič Hruščov i madjarsko pitanje 1955-1956", *Tokovi istorije*, I-IV (1998), 56.

is simply not feasible. It was Koča Popović, the longest serving Minister of Foreign Affairs in communist Yugoslavia, who best summed up the ideological nature of Tito's foreign policy:

“When I said that these disagreements [between Minister Popović and the hard liners in the top echelons of the state and party hierarchy] had deeper roots, I was thinking first and foremost of the unparalleled ideological heritage – the heritage which in spite of everything makes the USSR ‘the main pillar of socialism’, i.e. that even the Eastern camp ‘belongs to the socialist world’. From this ideological source the conclusion which necessarily followed was that Yugoslavia – non-aligned as it may be – cannot be equally impartial towards the West and the East, simply because by its political program and historical aim it belongs to the ‘socialist world’, i.e. ‘the international workers’ movement’ in which, despite everything, the USSR has a decisive role”.⁵³

The fact that Yugoslavia did not join either bloc did not mean that it was equally distanced from both – the ideological proximity to the Eastern bloc was a constant factor in Tito's foreign policy.

Cooperation: 1957-1968

In Yugoslav and international historiography, the choice to not join either bloc or the policy of non-alignment has been hailed as a big and innovative step of Yugoslav foreign policy in the bi-polar order of international relations during the Cold War. The Non-Aligned Movement was no doubt an innovation in world diplomacy. From its very beginnings, the Yugoslav diplomacy strove to impose its experiences on the whole movement and to direct its orientation in accordance with its interests. From its inception, the movement had an anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist character, so it was not devoid of ideological characteristics and goals, as was the case with the Yugoslav foreign policy as well. Tito and the Yugoslav diplomats took care for the movement not to lose its non-bloc character, meaning that they made efforts to avoid the movement becoming a part of the Eastern bloc on the basis of ideological similarities. The positions and strategies of the Non-Aligned Movement were therefore almost identical to the position of Yugoslavia towards the Eastern bloc.

The policy of non-alignment could be described as a sublimation of the Yugoslav experience accumulated during the period of conflict with the USSR (1948-1956) and transformed into a series of principles, which were suggested to the recently liberated countries of Asia and Africa as the common denominator of a joint project. The essence of the idea of non-alignment was best summed up by Mirko Tepavac, Tito's Minister of Foreign Affairs 1969-1972:

“The significance of our non-alignment had always lain in resisting to unwillingly be included into a bloc (on the grounds of our belonging to the ‘socialist world’) and the tendency of our party members – as well

⁵³ A. Nenadović, *Razgovori s Kočom* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), 134-135.

as the international public – to interpret our non-bloc position as the distancing of our country from the USSR ([...] as the USSR is, after all, a socialist country). [...] The declaration of our non-alignment was in fact a declaration of independence. First and foremost of independence from the USSR, where the threat was more imminent, and we, due to our ideological burden, more susceptible to it.”⁵⁴

Not only were the basic principles of the movement formulated during the conflict between Belgrade and Moscow, but the movement itself got its institutional form at the First Conference in Belgrade (September 1961), during the so-called second Yugoslav clash with the USSR. The reason behind it was the refusal of the LCY to sign a declaration of 12 communist parties in November 1957, which contained an invitation for the formation of a new common forum. Instead of joining the new Cominform, in its new program prepared for the Seventh Congress (April 1958), the LCY insisted on the independence of communist parties in their choice of the path to socialism. Once again, the differences of opinion were so great that the Soviet side cancelled all political and economic arrangements with Yugoslavia, and the Eastern bloc countries sent only observers to the LCY’s congress.⁵⁵ The paradox of the Yugoslav communists’ new position was that the countries of people’s democracy considered the new program of the LCY as avant-garde and a breach of the basic norms of Marxism-Leninism, while the socialist and social-democratic parties refused to attend the Congress as a form of protest against the new sentences against M. Djilas and other Yugoslav dissidents. Thus, the LCY found itself in the position to at once be considered a nucleus of right-wing revisionism and a Stalinist dictatorship.

The result of this position was its evident isolation within the „progressive”, socialist and communist world. The relations with the West were no more favorable. In late 1957, Yugoslavia recognized the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which led to a break in the relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. Also in 1957, Tito demanded that the American military aid be discontinued and that the American military mission leave Yugoslavia by March 1958 at the latest. The relationship with France became tense in January 1958, when the French navy intercepted the Yugoslav ship *Slovenija*, finding her full to the brim of arms intended for the rebels in Algeria who were fighting against the French forces. The aforementioned arrest and trial of Djilas and other dissidents (such as Aleksandar Pavlović and Bogdan Krekić, members of the Socialist International), as well as the refusal to allow Vladimir Dedijer to travel to Manchester to give a series of lectures, all worsened the relations with Great Britain.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ A. Nenadović, *Mirko Tepavac, sećanja i komentari* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1998), 160-161.

⁵⁵ Bogetić, *Nova strategija*, 184-192.

⁵⁶ D. Bogetić, “Drugi jugoslovensko-sovjetski sukob 1958. i koncept aktivne miroljubive koegzistencije”, *Istorija 20. veka*, 2(2004), 123-124.

In mid-1958, it seemed that after ten years Yugoslavia had ended up in a position identical to the one it held when the conflict with the Cominform had been at its peak. Undoubtedly, some similarities did indeed exist. Tito's Yugoslavia had tense relations with both blocs; in addition, it was at risk of an economic catastrophe due to the definite cancellation of an extremely important Soviet investment program. In 1956, very favorable agreements on investment programs amounting to 285 million dollars and intended for the industrialization of Yugoslavia, were signed with the USSR and GDR. The response of the Yugoslav leadership was based on the same logic as had been the case ten years earlier. A request for urgent (primarily American) aid was issued, but at the same time efforts were made to provide valid proof to the Soviet comrades that the Yugoslav communists had not strayed from the path of Marxism-Leninism. From February to September 1958, instead of the cancelled Soviet investment program, Yugoslavia asked Washington for loans in the form of food supplies and investment programs for further industrialization of the country amounting to the princely sum of 352 million US dollars.⁵⁷

Despite the fact that the economic future of the country depended on the American aid, Tito's diplomatic staff did not hesitate to unambiguously take the side of the USSR in the matter of the Iraq crisis, where in June 1958 General Abdul Karim Qasim had organized a coup d'état and established a republic which annulled all agreements with Great Britain and withdrew from the Baghdad Pact. Tito recognized Qasim's revolutionary government and condemned the arrival of the American Marines in Lebanon and the presence of British troops in Jordan, even though the Western troops had arrived following official invitations from the governments of Lebanon and Jordan in order to prevent the revolutionary wave spilling over from Iraq into their countries. On this occasion, General Secretary of the Soviet party, Nikita Khrushchev offered praise to his Yugoslav comrades, commenting that their views were identical even though they had not consulted with each other on this topic.⁵⁸ Certainly, what the Yugoslav and the Soviet communists had in common was their anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist policy in Asia and Africa. Tito explicitly confirmed this to Khrushchev during their meeting in September 1960 at the fifteenth session of the UN General Assembly.⁵⁹

However, certain differences did exist between them. Tito was reproached by Moscow for mentioning the two blocs, because his Soviet comrades thought it unacceptable to describe the struggle of people's democracies for peace and progress in the world as bloc policy. As a communist, he was criticized for allowing the Yugoslav policy of non-alignment to be devoid of

⁵⁷ D. Bogetić, "Jugoslavija i svetsko tržište kapitala. Americka finansijska podrška jugoslovenskim razvojnim programima krajem 50-tih godina", *Tokovi istorije*, 3/2010, 96.

⁵⁸ V. Mićunović, *Moskovske godine 1956/58* (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska revija, 1977), 482.

⁵⁹ Proceedings from the meeting between Tito and Khrushchev, New York, 28 September 1960, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/12.

the class element. In 1958, Khrushchev began offering economic and political support to the recently liberated countries and movements in Asia and Africa, believing that it could provide a new platform for a global revolution and the triumph of progressive forces over the “imperialists and colonialists.”⁶⁰ The fact of the matter was that the Soviet economic aid was the only basis for the development of the new countries, as they could not hope to receive any funding from former colonial powers and did not have enough economic strength to enter into commercial arrangements with the US. The importance of Soviet aid was so great that even the closest of Tito’s allies in Asia and Africa distanced themselves from him in 1958, fearing that their close ties with Yugoslavia might put the Soviet economic support at risk. Therefore, during his tour of Africa and Asia in 1958/1959, Tito received a very lukewarm welcome. His talks with Nehru held in New Delhi in January 1959 were reduced to a monologue of Tito’s which Nehru practically never interrupted.⁶¹

The reaction of Tito and the Yugoslav diplomacy to the challenges which had arisen from their second conflict with the USSR was expressed in the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. The policy of non-alignment was given its full expression during preparations for the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in September 1961 in Belgrade. The policy of peaceful co-existence meant the kind of relations Yugoslavia wanted to establish with all countries, especially with the two competing blocs. Considering the circumstances which led to the full application of these two axioms of the Yugoslav foreign policy, the question of their genuine meaning arises.

In fact, the policy of non-alignment was a long and arduous process of establishing an active political and – to a much lesser degree – economic cooperation with the newly liberated countries in Africa and Asia. The meeting of Tito, Nasser and Nehru in summer 1956 on the Brioni islands had only nominal importance, as no concrete political action ensued from it. Despite being touted as the founding session of the Third bloc, the meeting of Tito, Nasser, Nehru, Nkrumah and Sukarno held in September 1960 in New York went no further than issuing a joint declaration calling on the two powers to dialogue. In fact, Tito’s endeavor to find an economic and political alternative to his tense relations with the blocs in the cooperation with Third World countries yielded only limited results. In April 1961, Tito and Nasser, shortly joined by the Indonesian leader Sukarno, issued a joint invitation to the leaders of 21 non-bloc countries resulted in the First Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in September 1962 in Belgrade.⁶² Undoubtedly, this was a huge

⁶⁰ S. Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev: The Creation of a Superpower* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 404.

⁶¹ D. Bogetić, “Politička pozadina i stvarni domašaj saradnje Tito – Nehru 1954-1964”, *Arhiv*, 1-2, 2006, 146.

⁶² The joint statement of Tito and Nasser following their talks in Cairo, 26 April 1961, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/13.

success of Yugoslav diplomacy. The gathering of non-bloc countries around a platform defined by Tito's diplomacy on the basis of past Yugoslav experiences had brought Tito world-wide fame. However, the practical results of the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement fell very short of Tito's and his diplomats' expectations.

Despite the obvious increase in Yugoslavia's prestige, the summit did not help solve its pressing political and economic problems – quite the contrary. Tito's speech at the opening ceremony was in fact a very sharp and inappropriate attack on colonial powers and the US. His speech not only conveyed the impression that Yugoslavia's policy in Asia and Africa was identical to the Soviet policy, but Tito also tried to justify the Soviet testing of nuclear weapons, which had until then been subject to a moratorium. He then condemned the intention of the West to start arming the Federal Republic of Germany in response to the erection of the Berlin Wall. Koča Popović, at the time serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, later claimed that the pro-Soviet speech of Tito's was written without consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

“I was not even informed of the decision not to condemn the Soviet explosion at the opening ceremony of the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries; this was included into Tito's speech afterwards, without consultations with the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. It was left to me as the first man of the diplomatic office to try and put out the fire which had promptly erupted as best I could. I had no choice but to unconvincingly deny the protests of the Western representatives, particularly those of the US ambassador George Kennan – a man who was, by the way, very much in favor of strengthening Yugoslav-American relations. The vacillations and deviations from the true non-aligned path – like this one at the Belgrade Conference in fall 1961 – convinced me that the reality check dearly paid for in 1948 was being ignored. I feared that the renewal of the ‘party line’ together with Moscow's political leaders was pulling us into pro-Soviet waters and putting at risk the very independence of the country in matters of foreign policy as the only acceptable basis of the non-aligned policy.”⁶³

It was the ‘party line’ that was the reason for the change in the orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy. Already during their meeting in New York in September 1960, Tito proposed to Khrushchev a renewal of party ties and said that the Yugoslav comrades were doing their best to revise everything that could hinder the correct application of the Marxist-Leninist theory.⁶⁴ But Tito's concession was not enough as Khrushchev on that occasion – as well as at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet party – denounced the LCY as revisionist. At the Congress, however, he changed his official appraisal of non-aligned countries, declaring that they were fighting against colonialism and imperialism and for

⁶³ Nenadović, *Razgovori s Kočom*, 138.

⁶⁴ Proceedings from the meeting between Tito and Khrushchev, New York, 28 September 1960, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/13.

world peace. This positive opinion of the non-aligned countries was the basis for the Soviet thesis about the common goals of the movement and the socialist bloc in the struggle against imperialism.⁶⁵ In fact, Khrushchev's appraisal of the non-aligned countries was essentially in accord with the statements Tito had included in his speech at the Summit; the difference was that Tito saw only possibilities for cooperation between the two movements, but certainly not for unity. Thus, the policy of non-alignment – the first of the two axioms of Yugoslav foreign policy – gained the support of Soviet comrades. The meaning and realization of the second axiom – peaceful coexistence – were defined by the end of 1962, when Tito after his return from the USSR declared that Yugoslavia was pursuing a policy of peaceful and active co-existence with all countries, but that it was also following the “principle of closest cooperation with socialist countries”, as it was itself a socialist state.⁶⁶

The process of aligning the positions of Belgrade and Moscow had begun in summer 1961, after the signing of an important trade agreement. As the main topic of the 22nd Congress of the Soviet party had been de-Stalinization of the Soviet society, the premises required for the renewal of relations between the two communist parties were once again put in place. However, the Soviet's opinion that their Yugoslav comrades were guilty of revisionism was still an obstacle. At the meeting with the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko in April 1962 in Belgrade and during the visit of the President of the USSR Presidium Leonid Brezhnev to Yugoslavia in September and October 1962, foundations were laid for the removal of this last problem. During his stay in the USSR in December 1962, Tito agreed with Khrushchev that they should no longer dwell on the differences between them. Khrushchev, whose reputation and authority had been quite damaged after the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba, made a concession to his Yugoslav comrades and officially declared that Yugoslavia was a socialist country.

Almost ten years after Stalin's death, Tito finally succeeded in establishing relations with the USSR on principles of his own choice. For him, peaceful co-existence meant that Yugoslavia would maintain close economic and political ties built on its ideological closeness with socialist countries. Thus, the professed equidistance of Yugoslav foreign policy was merely formal, as – although Yugoslavia did not belong to either bloc – its foreign policy shared the ideological premises of the Soviets, which often led to identical views. The key difference was that Yugoslavia kept its independent position and did not accept any form of cooperation which could have been interpreted as a return to the Eastern bloc. Tito and his closest associates based their argumentation on these points in their talks with American diplomats. In fact, they believed their closeness to the Eastern bloc was natural and felt that the fact that Yugo-

⁶⁵ D. Bogetić, “Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi pocetkom 60-tih godina”, *Istorija 20. veka*, Belgrade, 3/2011, 211.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

slavia was not a member of the Warsaw Pact but a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement was proof enough of its non-aligned position.

The reaction of the US to the new orientation of Tito's foreign policy intimated in his speech at the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement was gradually taking shape. In the atmosphere of the Berlin crisis and renewed Soviet nuclear testing, the Democrat administration of President J. F. Kennedy paid particular attention to Tito's support for Soviet views. The newly appointed American ambassador to Belgrade, George F. Kennan, the author of the famous long telegram which had in 1947 set the foundations for the policy of containment, was held in great esteem by President Kennedy and the State Department, so his reports were read very carefully. His reaction to Tito's speech was rather strong – he wrote that the Yugoslav president was the architect of the new, pro-Soviet course of Yugoslav foreign policy, but that there were other Yugoslav officials who disagreed with the pro-Soviet course, such as ambassador Josip Djerdja and even Kardelj.⁶⁷ He thought that the US response to Tito's unreserved support to the Soviets must be the cancellation or decrease of various forms of aid, so that the Yugoslav would not start believing that American aid was guaranteed to them no matter what.⁶⁸ Kennan concluded his analysis of Tito's new policy by saying:

“There is no doubt that the goal of the Yugoslav as well as Moscow's policy is to obstruct American efforts and to remove our country as an important factor in international relations. This policy is not the result of a lack of independence, but a willing choice of Tito's. If he wanted, he could very well pursue a different course.”⁶⁹

The State Department's Bureau for European Affairs and the White House only partially adopted Kennan's advice. The most important form of American aid – the supply of grain – went on, but the American side announced that it would in the following period demand payment in dollars instead of dinars. The financial aid to the Yugoslav investment program, agreed upon at the request of Yugoslavia in 1960, was not discontinued. However, President Kennedy did discontinue the program of aid in military equipment, limiting it to the supply of spare parts for the equipment which had already been delivered.⁷⁰ At the same time, the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk refused Ken-

⁶⁷ Kennan's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 15 September 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 97, 204.

⁶⁸ Kennan's letter to McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Advisor, Washington, Belgrade, 27 October 1961 and the attachment, Kennan's letter to Foyle Culler, the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Belgrade, 27 October 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 106, 222–230.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Memorandum of the National Security Council, Washington, 15 January 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 118, 255. The Yugoslav request for financial aid from 1958 was repeated in the fall of 1960 and in late 1960 resulted in a program of international aid amounting to 275 million dollars, with the

nan's suggestion to fundamentally re-examine the American policy towards Yugoslavia. He thought that after 1948 it had played a key role in preserving Yugoslavia's independence. In his opinion, Yugoslavia had kept its communist regime, and tended to lend support to Soviet views in the international stage, but its position was more alike to the Leftist non-aligned countries such as Indonesia than to that of Soviet satellites.⁷¹ A more detailed analysis by the State Department Bureau of European Affairs confirmed Kennan's conclusion that Tito was the author of the pro-Soviet policy and that his regime was a communist one, but American diplomats also decided that Yugoslavia had made much progress in comparison to its status of the most loyal Soviet satellite in 1948. They judged that it was in the interest of the US to do all in its power to encourage Yugoslavia's development in that direction.⁷² The position of the American administration was summed up in a commentary of the National Security Council:

"As long as the communist regime stays in power in Yugoslavia, our relations will be difficult [...] the goal of our policy was not to alter Yugoslavia's political views, but to tie it to the West as much as possible and thus limit its dependency on the eastern bloc."⁷³

Yet, the decision to cooperate with Yugoslavia was not unconditional – it demanded that Tito would not base his foreign policy on ideological criteria and, most importantly, that Yugoslavia would keep its independence. These minimal prerequisites were communicated to Koča Popović by the American President himself during the former's visit to Washington in May 1962.⁷⁴

Precisely because it thought that Tito's regime was disrespectful of it, the American Congress assumed a much harder line towards Yugoslavia than Kennedy's administration. Believing that Tito had in his speech in Belgrade crossed over to the Soviet side, the American congressmen classed Yugoslavia as an Eastern bloc country. Despite the lobbying of Kennedy's administration, this resulted in the House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services decision of June 1962 to strip Yugoslavia of its status as the most privileged

participation of the US, England, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and the International Monetary Fund. Kennedy's administration completed its part of the agreement, providing 100 million dollars in aid. Lj. Adamović, Dž. Lempi, R. Priket, *Americko-jugoslavenski ekonomski odnosi posle Drugog svetskog rata* (Belgrade: Radnička stampa, 1990), 62.

⁷¹ Dj. Tripković, "Poboljšanje jugoslovensko-sovjetskih odnosa 1961-1962", *Tokovi istorije* IV, 2008, 84. D. Rusk's memorandum to President Kennedy, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 112, 238-241.

⁷² F. Culler to Kennan, Washington, 4 December 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 113, 242-247.

⁷³ The memorandum of David Klein from the National Security Council to Bundy, the President's Adviser on National Security; Washington, 17 April 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 122, 260-261.

⁷⁴ Memorandum on the talks between Kennedy and Popović, Washington, 29 May 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 122, 260-261.

country in trade agreements with the US, which Serbia and later Yugoslavia had enjoyed ever since 1881.⁷⁵

The whole Kennedy administration, especially the US ambassador in Belgrade Kennan, thought this decision of the Congress extremely risky, because it blocked the export of Yugoslav goods to the US and hence contributed to its economic isolation. Therefore, Kennan was called to Washington and asked to lobby for the reversal of this decision.⁷⁶ Despite Kennan's efforts, in September 1962 both houses of the Congress passed a bill which stripped Yugoslavia of its status of the most privileged country in dealings with the US. The complexity of the American policy towards Yugoslavia is perhaps best illustrated by the situation in late 1962 and early 1963. Kennan reported from Belgrade that the main priority of Tito's movement was to regain the respect of and be readmitted into the fold of the global communist movement, which had had it expelled in 1948.⁷⁷ On Tito's return from his visit to the USSR in December 1962, Kennan went a step further and stated that the Yugoslav president no longer thought the relations with the US vitally important for the Yugoslav regime.⁷⁸ The paradox of Kennan's position lay in the fact that the hard line – which he had initially advocated – was adopted by the US Congress despite his protestations and that it had also proved the only effective method.

In 1963, American-Yugoslav relations entered a less tempestuous phase, primarily thanks to the efforts of Yugoslavia, which was very interested in regaining its status of the most privileged country in dealings with the US.⁷⁹ Tito took it upon himself to convince the Americans that his policy would not jeopardize the minimal prerequisites for cooperation Kennedy had demanded of Popović. In a letter to the American President sent in April 1963, he pointed out that the Yugoslav foreign policy rested on the principles of independence and non-alignment. He thought it necessary to underline that the better relations with the USSR and other socialist countries were not established at the cost of American friendship.⁸⁰ In his letter, Tito emphasized that it was necessary for Yugoslavia to regain its status of the most privileged country. The Yugoslav side also insisted on this point during the visit of the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Yugoslavia in May 1963.⁸¹ After his talks with Koča Popović and an audience with Tito on the Brioni islands, Rusk

⁷⁵ Adamović, Lempj, Priket, *Americko-jugoslovenski ekonomski odnosi*, 64.

⁷⁶ J. L. Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: an American life* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

⁷⁷ Kennan's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 28 November 1962, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 140, 296.

⁷⁸ Kennan's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 3 December 1962, *ibid.*, document 144, 316.

⁷⁹ D. Bogetić, "Jugoslavija i SAD – od sporenja ka saradnji: iskušenja na putu normalizacije odnosa tokom 1963", *Istorija 20. veka*, II, 2009, 125.

⁸⁰ Tito's letter to Kennedy, Belgrade, 7 April 1963, AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/1089.

⁸¹ Rusk's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 5 May 1963, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 160, 350–353.

concluded that they were determined to preserve the independent position of Yugoslavia.⁸²

The normalization of relations had become possible because Tito and his associates offered assurances to Kennedy's administration that Yugoslavia would not join the Eastern bloc. However, they also pointed out that they would not maintain close ties with the USSR and would frequently lend their support to Soviet positions in matters of foreign policy, because – as Tito told Kennan in March 1963 – Yugoslavia did not vote in the UN in accordance with the Soviets because it was forced to, but because it sincerely believed that the Soviet solutions to certain problems were indeed the best options.⁸³ The identical conclusion in a somewhat different form was communicated by Tito to Kennedy during their talks in Washington in October 1963. Tito stated that the bloc division of countries was an outdated concept and that, in his opinion, what mattered was the difference between the countries which strived for peace and those that did not.⁸⁴ The implicit admittance of the Yugoslav allegiance to the Soviet foreign policy postulates did not harm the process of normalizing the relations with the US. For his part, Kennedy underlined that their bilateral relations had progressed since Tito's speech at the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries of September 1961, and that he wished them to progress even further.⁸⁵ The tone of the discussions in Washington was indicative of the new phase in their bilateral relations – a phase marked by the acceptance of each other's differences. The US was willing to accept the pro-Soviet orientation of Tito's foreign policy as long as it did not lead to Yugoslavia formally joining the Eastern bloc. For their part, the Yugoslavs suggested that their economic relations no longer be based on American aid but on the principle of normal trade exchange. This meant that Yugoslavia would once again become the most privileged country, but also that any exchanges would take place under the usual market principles – the payments were henceforth to be executed in dollars, as the American President had wanted since January 1962.⁸⁶ In November 1963, after Kennedy's tragic death, the Democrat administration managed to return the status of the most privileged country in trade agreements with the US to Yugoslavia.

The normalization of relations with the US was the last step in the consolidation of Yugoslavia's position on the international stage, a process which had begun with the signing of the Moscow declaration in 1956. Freed from any imminent Soviet pressure, Tito's diplomacy sought to find a viable framework

⁸² Dragan Bogetić, "Jugoslavija i SAD", 128.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁴ Proceedings from the meeting between Tito and Kennedy, Washington, 17 October 1963, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 162, 353–359.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

for the country's non-bloc position. On a nominal and communicational level, the policy of non-aligned was indeed such a concept. The drastically increased prestige of the country and its president illustrated the success of this strategy, just like the strained relations with both blocs from 1959 to 1963 had revealed its shortcomings. The policy of non-alignment could not, however, offer solutions for Yugoslavia's basic political and economic problems. The pro-Soviet orientation of Tito's foreign policy removed external pressure and solved the country's economic problems; in addition, it was entirely conform with Tito's personal beliefs about the unity and identical aims of socialist countries and the Non-Aligned Movement. Tito's insistence on the institutional differences between the two movements, his concern for the preservation of Yugoslav independence and particularly the efforts he made to stay in power in Yugoslavia were deemed by the US as adequate – albeit minimal – prerequisites for the continuation of economic cooperation. The Kennedy administration abandoned its plan to significantly limit or even discontinue its aid and the economic relations with Tito, believing that in this case he would not hesitate to join the Eastern bloc. Interestingly, ambassador Kennan – who left Yugoslavia in the summer of 1963 – was an advocate of exerting increased pressure on Tito, arguing that he would never join the Eastern bloc as that would entail Soviet influence on the personnel chosen to lead Yugoslavia and could potentially lead to his personal fall from power.⁸⁷ After its consolidation in 1962–1963, the position of Yugoslavia on the international stage would not undergo significant changes until the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The pro-Soviet and non-aligned orientation combined with active economic cooperation with the West seemed best suited to the communist beliefs of Tito. The first signs of its inadequacy in the context of new global events appeared within the Non-Aligned Movement.

To the domestic as well as foreign public, the Non-Aligned Movement was presented as the foundation of Yugoslavia's foreign policy. The prestige acquired by the Yugoslav diplomacy for its leading role in the movement was an indirect guarantee of the country's independence. But future events would show that the internal cohesion of the movement and its economic significance were far from what the Yugoslav diplomats had hoped for. The participants of the Belgrade Summit were not even unanimous in their opinion of its character, let alone its future. In accordance with his position of independent action on the international stage, Nehru held on to his view that it was a one-off summit with only declarative significance.⁸⁸ The summit in Cairo of 1964 did not contribute to the institutional shaping of the movement or its internal

⁸⁷ Kennan's letter to McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Advisor, Washington, Belgrade, 27 October 1961 and the attachment, Kennan's letter to Foyle Culler, the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Belgrade, 27 October 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 106, 222–230.

⁸⁸ Bogetić, "Politička pozadina", 149; B. Zachariah, *Nehru* (London: Routledge, 2004), 236.

cohesion, while economic ties were still very limited. From 1961 to 1968, Yugoslavia's trade with the other two founding countries of the movement – India and Egypt – never accounted for more than 3% of the country's annual export or import. In this period, for example, the export to USSR amounted to 17.5% (1967) and to the US 20.5% (1962), while the import from West Germany in 1968 amounted to 17.8% of the imported goods sum-total.⁸⁹

The structural fragility of the movement was revealed during the Israeli-Arab conflict of June 1967. After the conflict had ended, on 12 June Nasser received Tito's personal envoy Koča Popović, and informed him that he thought the Non-Aligned Movement had lost its purpose.⁹⁰ Egypt's catastrophic defeat in its conflict with Israel was no doubt the reason for this conclusion of Nasser's. The real reason for his abandoning of the policy of non-alignment, however, was revealed during his talks with the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Nikolai Podgorny in June 1967 in Cairo. On this occasion, Nasser declared that the Non-Alignment Movement was no more and offered control of Egyptian harbors from Alexandria to the Red Sea to the USSR. Thus, in the first serious crisis since its inception, the movement lost one of its founders to the Eastern bloc. Podgorny refused Nasser's proposal of a military alliance and, on his way home, paid a visit to Tito on the Brioni islands, informing him of his talks with Nasser. On that occasion, he also informed Tito of the Soviet leadership's opinion that Nasser and his country should stay members of the Non-Aligned Movement, as they were a convenient proxy for pursuing certain policies in Asia and Africa. The irony that the President of the Supreme Soviet was forced to defend the purpose of the movement before one of its own founders did not escape Tito; he could only respond that the responsibility for such a turn of events did not lie with the movement but with Nasser.⁹¹

The Israeli assault and victory over Egypt came as a shock to both Tito and the other Yugoslav high-ranking officials. On the very first day of the conflict (5 June 1967), Tito reacted in accordance with his most genuine beliefs when during a previously arranged visit he told the Bulgarian president Todor Zhivkov that all non-aligned and socialist countries were under the imperialist threat and that they must fight together against it.⁹² Hoping to facilitate the cooperation between non-aligned and socialist countries, Tito took part at the conference of socialist countries held in Moscow on 9-10 June 1967. On that occasion, he stated that the attack on Egypt was part of a larger imperialistic

⁸⁹ *Jugoslavija 1918-1988. Statistički godišnjak* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1988), 300-307.

⁹⁰ Proceedings from the talks between Popović and Nasser, Cairo, 12 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35-3.

⁹¹ Proceedings from the talks between Tito and Podgorny, Brioni islands, 24 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-a/97.

⁹² Proceedings from the talks between Tito and Zhivkov, Belgrade, 5 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35.

plan in the Mediterranean, and that Yugoslavia was also under its threat. The April 1967 coup d'état in Greece, as well as US military bases in Italy, Spain and Cyprus, proved the aggressive intentions of the West, Tito claimed. According to him, the attack on Egypt was part of a wider strategy of the West to defeat the progressive forces in a series of localized conflicts; hence, it was imperative to change the widespread belief that local wars unavoidably lead to global conflicts. Tito was convinced that Nasser must be given all available help and support, as the fate of progressive forces in Africa depended on his staying in power.⁹³

Tito decided to take part in the Moscow conference without consulting his high-ranking party and state officials. This was a precedent in Yugoslav foreign policy. Until then, Tito had always refused to participate in conferences held in Moscow, as those were reserved for the members of the Eastern bloc. It was the attempt to defend the Non-Aligned Movement that had brought Tito to Moscow; no doubt, this was also the moment when his pro-Soviet orientation was at its peak. At the second conference of socialist countries held in Budapest on July 11th 1967, Tito was entrusted with the mission of mediating in the Middle East. He accepted the task, but noted that he would not do so in the capacity of a representative of socialist countries but as the Yugoslav president.⁹⁴ Tito's strategy of united action of socialist countries and the Non-Aligned Movement was ultimately revealed to lead to the supremacy of Soviet interests within the movement. The response of Egypt and other Arab countries (such as Algeria) was to demand that the USSR take the Arab side in the conflict with Israel.⁹⁵ This more than limited the space for the Yugoslav interpretation of the non-aligned movement as a group of countries led by common principles in matters of foreign policy. Yugoslavia's diplomatic campaign in the United Nations was not met with much support in the Arab world, as these countries wanted to triumph on the battlefield, and needed Soviet arms to accomplish this. Tito's visit to Egypt, Syria and Iraq in August 1967 provided an opportunity for the Yugoslav president to realize just how much the reputation of the Non-Aligned Movement had been damaged. In his talks with Nasser, the Arab leader revealed his opinion that the Non-Aligned countries were disunited and helpless to defy the decision of the great powers which are in agreement with each other. Tito's concept of the Non-Aligned Movement as a powerful moral factor in international affairs which would not take the shape of a static group defined once and for all was not received as particularly significant in these circumstances. Nasser held on to his view that the US were forcefully threatening the survival of progressive countries in Africa and that the Non-Aligned were helpless (and the USSR unwilling) to challenge it.⁹⁶

⁹³ Tito's report from the conference in Moscow, AJ, 837, 11 June 1967, KPR I-2/33.

⁹⁴ Tito's report from the conference in Budapest, 11 July 1967, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/34.

⁹⁵ Proceedings from the talks between Tito and Boumediene, 16 July 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35.

⁹⁶ The proceedings from the talks between Tito and Nasser, Cairo, 12 August 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35-3.

The more than limited influence of the Non-Aligned Movement on the diplomatic outcome of the Middle Eastern crisis was partially remedied by Tito's role in their peace discussions owing to his personal reputation in Arab countries. Tito regularly communicated with the American President Lyndon Johnson and the Soviet party's Secretary-General L. I. Brezhnev. His visit to the Middle East in the summer of 1967 was also meant to give him an opportunity to familiarize the Arab leaders with the views of the socialist countries and with Johnson's suggestions for the solution of the crisis. However, The Americans felt that the proposed solution for the crisis which was the result of Tito's talks with the Arab leaders, did not give adequate guarantees to Israel, as it did not stipulate a ceasefire or an explicit obligation on the part of the Arab countries to recognize Israel and guarantee its territorial integrity. Hence, the diplomatic framework for the solution of the crisis was found in the British proposal of a compromise, which was finalized as the 242 UN Security Council Resolution. The resolution stipulated that Israel would withdraw from the conquered territories and that the Arab countries would, for their part, accept the existence of Israel and pledge to respect its territorial integrity and independence.⁹⁷

The Middle Eastern crisis revealed the limitations of the Non-Aligned Movement. The unity shown concerning general principles did not prove an effective basis for common action in the times of crisis. The only palpable result of its policy was the role of Tito as mediator. He could not be more than that, since the solution was found on the basis of the agreement of the great powers. The crisis undoubtedly contributed to the growth of his personal reputation, but the price was another difficult period of the country's foreign policy. Efforts to preserve the Non-Aligned Movement and keep Nasser in power resulted in the establishment of closest ties between Yugoslavia and the Eastern bloc since 1948. Yugoslavia took part in the Eastern bloc meetings held in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution, but also at the conference of ministers of foreign affairs held in December in Warsaw. On that occasion Andrei Gromyko suggested that these meetings be made regular so that the socialist countries could formulate common views and act together on the international stage.⁹⁸

The Soviet call for the establishment of institutional ties between socialist countries within a Cominform-like framework was the ultimate outcome of the close cooperation of Yugoslavia with the Eastern bloc. Tito's foreign policy had given the Soviets enough grounds to invite Yugoslavia to join the institutions of the Eastern bloc. At the same time, the relations with the US had taken a turn for the worse in June 1967 following Tito's participation at the conference of the Eastern bloc, but also because of a very sharp campaign against the US as the

⁹⁷ B. Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 346.

⁹⁸ D. Bogetić, "Priblizavanje Jugoslavije socijalistickom lageru tokom Arapsko-Izraelskog rata 1967. godine", *Tokovi istorije* 3-4, 2008, 114.

instigator and protector of Israeli aggression. Hence, Tito had no choice but to personally assure the American ambassador in Belgrade Charles Elbrick that Yugoslavia had not abandoned the principles of its independent foreign policy.⁹⁹ The Yugoslav condemnation of the American involvement in the Vietnam War, the diminished role of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Tito's support to Arab views, were the elements which led to a decrease in the concern of the Johnson administration for the positions of Belgrade and hence to the worsening of their bilateral relations. In mid 1968, the Yugoslav foreign policy once again entered a phase of uncertainty as the position established in 1962-1963 had been challenged by bad relations with both of the great powers. The Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia of August 1968 and Brezhnev's doctrine of limited sovereignty shaped the new orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy.

Détente as regional cooperation: Italo-Yugoslav relations

The end of the Prague Spring just ten days after Tito's visit to Prague (10-11 August 1968) clearly indicated the limits of the pro-Soviet orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy. Tito went to Czechoslovakia trying to prevent intervention, but all his, and the efforts of his diplomats to convince their Soviet leadership that the intervention was unnecessary were futile. He was not even informed of the invasion, which came as both a surprise and a public refutation of his mediation. Furthermore, the Soviet criticism of the Czechoslovakian leadership was increasingly beginning to sound as condemnations of any other path to socialism except the Soviet one. Not only was the attempt of democratizing the Czechoslovakian society trampled under Soviet tanks but this danger again loomed over Yugoslavia too.¹⁰⁰ Once again, Tito's Yugoslavia had no choice but to seek help for the preservation of its independence in the West. Yugoslav diplomats headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Marko Nikezić repeatedly asked their American colleagues what would be the reaction of the US in the event of a Soviet aggression against Yugoslavia. The assurances the Secretary of State of Dean Rusk gave to the Yugoslav ambassador in the US Bogdan Crnobrnja, or those of US ambassador in Belgrade Elbrick to Nikezić, did not convince the Yugoslav leadership until President Johnson personally declared on 3 September 1968 that the US would not allow acts of aggression against a sovereign state.¹⁰¹

The anxiety in Belgrade was provoked by what Tito and his colleagues qualified as a mild if not inexistent American reaction to the invasion of

⁹⁹ Proceedings from the talks between Tito and the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court Warren and the US ambassador Elbrick, Belgrade, 27 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/35.

¹⁰⁰ Lj. Dimić, "Pogled iz Beograda na Čehoslovačku 1968. godine", *Tokovi istorije* 3-4, 2005, 227.

¹⁰¹ Notes of conversation of Rusk with Crnobrnja, Washington, 30 August 1968, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-170. Notes of conversation of Nikezić with Charles Elbrick, Belgrade, 30 August 1968, AJ, KPR, I-5-c, box 302.

Czechoslovakia. They were convinced that it was due to the existence of the agreement between superpowers that in essence had divided Europe in two distinct zones of influence. Various arrangements and talks between Moscow and Washington were the basis of the climate of *détente* that in Belgrade feared would be detrimental to the interests of small and especially non-aligned states such as Yugoslavia. As early as December 1966 Nikezić concluded that the understanding between the superpowers will diminish the risk of the nuclear war but will also enable them to tighten their control over countries in their respective blocs.¹⁰² The Yugoslav Foreign Minister, almost two years later, in September 1968 confirmed his previous conclusion. Moreover he did not exclude the possibility that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was not only a way of reinforcing its control over the Eastern Europe, but also a first stage in its expansion towards the Mediterranean. In that case Yugoslavia might still be in peril as the biggest obstacle for the Soviet expansion.¹⁰³

While in Belgrade the dilemma over the real objectives of Soviet policy persisted, a surprising imitative arrived from Italy. The Italian Foreign Minister, Giuseppe Medici, convoked the Yugoslav ambassador in Rome, Srdja Prica, on 2 September 1968 to inform him officially that Italy is prepare to give to Yugoslavia any kind of guarantee should Yugoslavia decide to remove its troops stationed on Italian in order to reinforce its northern frontier.¹⁰⁴ This rather unusual diplomatic gesture was a proof that the anxiety of Belgrade was shared by Italian government. The Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia obliged Italy's government to fundamentally revise its policy towards its neighbor.

The Italo-Yugoslav frontier was, as mentioned above, one of the first hot-spots of the Cold War. The London memorandum of 1954 codified the situation on the ground, i.e. the division of the ancient Italian provinces of Venezia Giulia and Istria in two zones, Western (A) Italian and Eastern (B) Yugoslav. The two neighbors over the years developed a flourishing commercial exchange on state and on the local level. Nevertheless, the territorial issue remained a huge problem, since the provisional status of the two zones meant that this was one of the last unsolved frontier problems in Europe. Furthermore, the citizenship or the property rights of the people living in both zones remained officially unsolved, even though the respective zones were gradually integrated in respective states. The Yugoslav government was pushing for the official acknowledgment of the situation on the ground, that is to say the conversion of the border between the zones in the frontier between two states, while Italy was against since an im-

¹⁰² Notes from the reunion of the Politburo of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Belgrade 7 December 1966, AJ, 507, III/124.

¹⁰³ Notes from the reunion of the Politburo of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Belgrade 2 September 1966, AJ, 507, III/135.

¹⁰⁴ Prica's report to Belgrade, Rome, 2 September 1968, AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44, 13. See also: Saša Mišić, "Jugoslovensko-italijanski odnosi i čehoslovačka kriza 1968. godine", in Radmila Radić ed., *1968 – četrdeset godina kasnije* (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008), 293-312.

portant part of public opinion and some, mainly local, political parties refused to accept the loss of a part of pre-war Italian territory.

After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia the Giovanni Leone's Christian Democrat government proposed the talks on the final settlement of the territorial issue. The proposal was in the form of an unofficial offer made Medici via the Italian ambassador in Belgrade Folko Trabalzza, and came as soon as 17 September 1968. The new climate of cooperation between Rome and Belgrade was even extended to include military issues, since the Italian guarantees were discussed by the military staff of both countries in January of 1969. Pietro Nenni, the Italian Foreign Minister (1968-1969) explained the Italian policy of cooperation with Yugoslavia by a common fear of Soviet aggression. In his diary he spoke of Tito's Yugoslavia as a guardian of Italy's eastern frontier.¹⁰⁵

The importance of regional cooperation of Italy and Yugoslavia was demonstrated not only in the aftermath of Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, but also in the years to come. The visits of Nenni and the President of Italian Republic, Giuseppe Saragat to Belgrade in 1969, and Tito's visit to Italia in 1971 were a proof of a durable regional partnership that went beyond the cleavages of the Cold War. The Italian initiative for the definitive solution of the territorial issue was followed up by a series of meeting of experts that were supposed to propose a common solution to the two governments. Their work went on hindered occasionally by outbursts of irredentist and national propaganda in Italian newspapers and even in Parliament. As Aldo Moro, several times Italian President of government and Minister of Foreign Affairs explained to his Yugoslav counterpart, Mirko Tepavac, in Venice in February 1971, the policy of seeking a durable settlement of territorial issues was an axiom of Italian foreign policy. However, Aldo Moro as well as his predecessors, and his successors, had to carefully choose the moment in which to make the negotiations public. The unstable majority of Christian Democrat governments in Italian Parliament made them fear the reaction of right wing opposition, but the principle of settlement on the basis of the situation on the ground, with perhaps minor adjustments, remained a constant of their Yugoslav policy.¹⁰⁶

The fast developing trade exchanges between Yugoslavia and Italy was the other pillar of their cooperation. As the President of the Federal government of Yugoslavia, Petar Stambolić, put it in March 1967, the intense trade relation with Italy were also a guarantee of good political relations, since Italy could not afford to put its own industrial interest in peril by worsening of political atmosphere between Rome and Belgrade.¹⁰⁷ From 1965 onwards the

¹⁰⁵ Massimo Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava" nella politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1945-1999)* (Roma: Aracne, 2008), 38-39.

¹⁰⁶ Notes of conversation between Moro and Tepavac, Venice, 9 February 1971, AJ KPR, I-5-b/44, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Notes from the reunion of the Politburo of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 16 March 1967, AJ, 507, III/125.

exchange trade between Yugoslavia and Italy grew by 9 percent annually.¹⁰⁸ The ever more developing trade, the general climate of *détente* in Europe, and the ongoing negotiations of experts led to the solution of the territorial issue, sealed by the Treaty of Osimo of 10 November 1975.¹⁰⁹ Regional cooperation was only a part of Yugoslav answer to the challenges created by policy *détente* between superpowers. The other was based on a multilateral approach.

Détente: Multilateral approach

The last period in which Tito was responsible for the creation of foreign policy was characterized by a multilateral approach based on the Non-Aligned Movement. The Movement's aims, however, were now defined more precisely than had been the case in the previous period. The Yugoslav diplomacy insisted that the organization of non-aligned countries must stay merely a movement instead of evolving into a bloc. That meant that they shared certain basic principles on which international relations should be based: the respect of territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, a ban on using force in international matters, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. Its insistence on the movement's initial shape, based on the principles proclaimed at its inception, was a necessary precondition for the growth of the movement and for allowing as many countries as possible to join it despite their different political organization. The movement's shape also allowed the Yugoslav diplomacy to have a key role within the movement, although such a role was not proportional to its economic potential and political significance. Yugoslav diplomats had great success in initiating a series of conferences meant to confirm the initial foundations of the movement and Tito's (as well as their own) leading role within it. Every other form of stronger institutional connection would necessarily have to take into account other criteria such as economic potential, political influence and military capacity – all aspects in which Yugoslavia could not possibly match the great states which had emerged in Asia and Africa following the process of de-colonization.

On the basis of this platform, the Yugoslav diplomats took part in conferences of the Non-Aligned held in Lusaka (1970), Algiers (1973), Colombo (1976) and Havana (1979). These regular conferences, a series of ministerial and preparatory meetings, the organized actions of the Non-Aligned Movement in the United Nations – all of this contributed to this period being quite rightly proclaimed the golden age of the Non-Aligned Movement. As the longest-standing leader of the movement, a member of the generation which had fought in World War II and (after Nasser's death) the only living founder of the

¹⁰⁸ M. Capriati, "Gli scambi commerciali tra Italia e Jugoslavia dal dopoguerra al 1991", in F. Botta, I. Garza eds., *Europa adriatica* (Bari: Laterza, 2004), 171.

¹⁰⁹ Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava"*, 73.

movement, the Yugoslav president enjoyed an immense reputation and great prestige within the movement. The Yugoslav diplomats proved very capable in multilateral negotiations and were the initiators of most of common actions of the Non-Aligned in the United Nations. It was thought that Yugoslavia held a very important position on the international scene. This, however, was merely an impression.

In times of major international crises, such as the Israeli-Arab conflict of 1973, Tito was regularly consulted by all major statesmen. In 1970, the American president Nixon paid a visit to Yugoslavia, which was certainly an important acknowledgement of Tito and Yugoslav diplomacy. During the visit, he asked to visit Zagreb, where before tens of thousands of its inhabitants he cried out "Long live Croatia!" in the Serbo-Croatian language. Nixon's act shows that the Republican administration was very much aware of the internal difficulties Yugoslavia was facing. Tito was certainly the first recipient of their support; however, President Nixon showed that he also had alternative solutions in mind if that course should not yield results. Brezhnev's visit to Yugoslavia in 1971 took the shape of an act of pressure on the Yugoslav leadership precisely because the reports of nationalism-fuelled and communist-led unrest in Croatia (Croatian Mass Movement) revealed that the Yugoslav path to socialism did not provide a solution for nationalistic conflicts.

From this perspective, Tito's policy of non-alignment seems not unlike a Potemkin village. Tito and Yugoslav diplomats were very active in the solution of the first oil crisis. The second meeting of the CSCE was held in Belgrade in 1977. Simultaneously, the process of reforms in Yugoslavia was aborted, and under the mask of self-government Yugoslavia became a confederation of six economically autarchic republics ruled by their respective communist parties and presided over by its aging dictator, life-long president, a one-time Partisan commander and the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Foreign policy has no vocation to organize internal affairs, but its orientation often does influence the circumstances within a country. But, as Tito focused his foreign policy on the cooperation with the Non-Aligned states, it could not have any positive impact on events in Yugoslavia. Ideological puritanism had prevented communist Yugoslavia from closer cooperation with the European Economic Community. The two axioms of the elderly Yugoslav lifetime dictator were non-alignment and self-government; what they had in common was that they were not financed domestically, but were fuelled by funds from Western sources. The increase in the standard of living, a series of great state-funded projects, a huge diplomatic network, aid provided to the Non-Aligned states – all these were parts of a project meant to demonstrate the validity of the Yugoslav path to socialism as a realistic alternative to the Soviet model. This was also the main reason that Tito's regime was so generously funded by the West in the last decade of his reign. The reason for supplying financial (and every other) aid to Tito had not changed since 1948 – it was only

the scope of Western aid that changed in accordance with the project's needs. When the West insisted on the concept of human rights, it was necessary to showcase the affluence of Yugoslav citizens so that their Eastern neighbors might use the freedoms granted by the "third basket" of the Helsinki Process – to demand changes in the Soviet political and economic model.

From this perspective, in the period following 1948, the Yugoslav diplomacy certainly showed commendable skillfulness, knowledge and initiative, but its results were nonetheless dire. In fact, its function was to act as a glass vitrine facing the world while Tito's policy pursued its own courses behind it. There was never a Yugoslav path to socialism – that attempt had proved itself economically unfeasible and politically inept to answer the challenges of the one-party system of the Yugoslav society. What kept this long-term illusion alive was Western economic aid and occasional political support, while the Yugoslav diplomacy created the impression of a disproportionately large and unfounded importance of Tito's Yugoslavia on the international scene. It is sufficient to consider the economic and political development of the Mediterranean countries which had in the 1970s ended long periods of dictatorship (Spain, Portugal, even Greece) in order to conclude that the Yugoslav path to socialism and its diplomacy were simply a failed experiment of the Yugoslav communist leader who could never outgrow the basic political postulates he had learnt in Stalin's capital in the 1930s.

