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/// Yugoslavia, the Helsinki Process, and the Challenges of Collective Security in Europe (1973–1975)

Abstract

The normalization of Yugoslav-Soviet relations, following a sudden complication due to harsh Yugoslav criticism of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, coincided with the establishment of a global political atmosphere of détente, as well as with the increasingly visible determination of the Yugoslav leadership to build a new model of national security within the framework of achieving pan-European security, which paved the way for the European Conference on Security and Cooperation. During the Conference in Helsinki from July 1973 to August 1975, Yugoslavia, together with a group of European non-aligned and neutral countries, contributed significantly to freeing this conference from the antagonistic framework of block confrontations and to approaching the solving of key international problems through democratic dialogue among the participants. The Yugoslav government placed great importance on the outcome of the Conference because they believed that this meeting could potentially play a very important role: both in the reaffirmation of the basic premise of the policy of non-alignment, as well as in the efforts to strengthen the European component of Yugoslav foreign policy. Yugoslavia showed a special interest in solving questions of the inviolability of borders and provided a favorable outcome of the debate on the necessity of linking questions of European security with the security of the Mediterranean.

== Introduction

The issue of socialist Yugoslavia's attitude toward the problems of collective security in Europe in the context of strengthening Soviet interventionism, the proclamation of the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty, and armed tensions in the Mediterranean Basin has thus far been viewed in historiography primarily in the context of Yugoslavia's attitude toward individual conflicts and major political

events. Certainly, hitherto little-or rarely used sources, mainly stored in the archival funds of the Presidency of the Socialist Federate Republic Yugoslavia (SFRY) and central party bodies kept in the Archives of Yugoslavia, as well as diplomatic documents preserved within the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, provide answers to a number of research questions. These questions include the place and role of Yugoslavia during the Helsinki process, the Yugoslav position in relation to the policies of the great powers, ensuring security in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the nature of Yugoslav efforts to firmly preserve the principle of the inviolability of existing state borders.

The short-lived war in the Middle East in 1967, the quick defeat of the armies of the Arab countries in the conflict with Israel, the slow and incoherent reaction of the non-aligned world, and the absence of more effective mechanisms to help the Arab countries encouraged the Yugoslav state leadership to think about a more effective way to protect its own national security.¹ The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, which followed only a year later, presented the existing problem of Yugoslav foreign policy with new challenges.² The return of interventionism to the European political scene demanded new answers from Yugoslavia. The normalization of Yugoslav-Soviet relations—after a sudden complication due to harsh Yugoslav criticism of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia—coincided with both the establishment of a global political atmosphere of détente, as well as the increasingly visible commitment of the Yugoslav leadership to build a new model of national security within the framework of achieving pan-European security. This latter development created a favorable atmosphere in mutual bilateral relations and opened the way to a more relaxed approach to the problems of European cooperation.³

During the first half of the '70s, one can trace the increasingly energetic efforts of Josip Broz Tito and his collaborators to maximally strengthen the European component of the Yugoslav policy of non-alignment and to suppress, as far as possible, the ever-present tendency for non-alignment to predominantly acquire the features of the Afro-Asian movement. Nevertheless, the political circles in Belgrade were undoubtedly satisfied that at the Non-Aligned Summit in Lusaka in September

1 == On the impact of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War on the national security of Yugoslavia, see Dragan Bogetić and Aleksandar Žvotić, *Jugoslavija i Arapsko-izraelski rat 1967* [Yugoslavia and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War] (ISI, 2010).

2 == On the main directions of Soviet foreign policy in that period, see Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

3 == On Yugoslavia's attitude toward the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, see Ljubodrag Dimić, "Pogled iz Beograda na Čehoslovačku 1968. godine" [View from Belgrade to Czechoslovakia in 1968], *Tokovi istorije* 3–4 (2005): 205–32; Jan Pelikan, *Yugoslavie a Pražsko jaro 1968* [Yugoslavia and Prague Spring 1968] (Univerzita Karlova, 2008).

1970, the Yugoslav initiative on the need to form a movement that would gather all non-bloc countries was finally accepted. Yugoslavia, as the leader of that movement, secured a respectable position in the sphere of international relations and the role of an important mediator in the negotiations between the two superpowers. This was even more so, as the non-aligned countries at that time had a convincing majority in the United Nations and easily secured the adoption of an entire series of decisions and declarations in that organization that were compatible with Yugoslav key foreign policy priorities.⁴

Many years of drowning in the Third World carried the danger that Yugoslavia would acquire the status of a kind of “gray zone” in Europe, since it was not known exactly whether it belonged in the camp of socialist states or not. Tito openly expressed his fear that the current situation could lead to a situation “that one day we will be hanging in the air.”⁵ The fear that the Americans, in order to achieve Soviet concessions on some important European and world issues, would relegate the interests of Yugoslavia to the background and abandon the previous strategy of supporting Yugoslav independence seemed more and more realistic. The current readiness of the United States to meet the Soviet initiative to convene a conference on European security, as well as the aspiration of the two superpowers to shape the political map of the world through direct negotiations, greatly contributed to the fears of Yugoslav officials. Although Tito advocated a policy of peaceful coexistence between the conflicting blocs and supported the doctrine of American President Richard Nixon on the need for a period of confrontation to give way to one of negotiations, he feared that the increasingly emphasized mutual cooperation of the two superpowers would not ultimately result in their settlements at the expense of small states.⁶

Apart from Yugoslav reservations regarding bipolar détente, which stemmed from the fear of an American-Soviet solution that would harm Yugoslavia, Tito and his associates were disturbed by the belief that the preparations for the so-called Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) increasingly indicated the supremacy of the two bloc groups in the consideration and regulation of practically all important international issues. These issues, according to the assessment of official Belgrade, would be resolved from the position of great power, involving mutually recognized and respected interests and the division of spheres of influence. In their view, this would be based on a balance of power and consensus and the

4 = = Dragan Bogetić, “Jugoslavija između Istoka i Zapada” [Yugoslavia between East and West], in *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu* [Yugoslavia in the Cold War], ed. Aleksandar Životić (INIS, 2010), 13–36.

5 = = AY-507/III/151–3. Discussion by J.B. Tito, Fifteenth session of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Society, December 3–4, 1970.

6 = = On Yugoslav-American relations, see Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslovensko-američki odnosi 1961–1971* [Yugoslav-American Relations 1961–1971], (ISI, 2012).

legitimacy of the most powerful countries. From the Yugoslav perspective, this was in direct contradiction to the concept of non-alignment, as well as to Yugoslav efforts to ensure that all countries participated equally in solving key international problems on the international stage. For this reason, Tito constantly criticized the limitations of the current bipolar détente and the provisionality of the solutions adopted by the two superpowers without or even against the will of the other states. Such a situation in international relations essentially represented the negation of the Non-Aligned Movement as an important and independent international factor.⁷

Therefore, Yugoslav officials attached great importance to the preparations for the CSCE, considering that this meeting could potentially play an extremely important role: both as part of the reaffirmation of the basic premises of the policy of non-alignment, and as part of efforts to maximally strengthen the European component of Yugoslavia's foreign policy. In addition, it was based on the position that European security undoubtedly represents the main guarantor of Yugoslavia's security.⁸

= = = Search for a Model of Collective Security

Tito and the leadership of Yugoslav diplomacy were aware that the realization of these goals was not possible without the synchronized joint performance of all non-bloc member states of the CSCE. That is why it was necessary for a small group of European non-aligned states (Yugoslavia, Malta and Cyprus) to achieve as close cooperation as possible and harmonize their performance with European neutral states (Austria, Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden). It seemed quite feasible since both groups of countries had the same interest: to thwart the efforts of the bloc groups to act as closed political and military entities that were focused on reaching compromises that concerned their narrower interests and strategic commitments. Otherwise, in the intermediate space between bloc alliances, neutral and non-aligned states would play the role of extras who would not be able to seriously influence the course of the conference. In such a situation, the non-bloc European states, proceeding from mutually related interests and similar points of view, approached the harmonization of their activities. This later led to the gradual formation of an action group of non-aligned and neutral states at the CSCE, which strongly influenced the course of the meeting and the content of the adopted documents.⁹

7 = = Dragan Bogetić, "Američke analize budućnosti Jugoslavije posle Tita s početka 70-tih godina" [American analyses of the future of Yugoslavia after Tito from the beginning of the 70s], *Tokovi istorije* 1 (2012): 159–174; Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i Hladni rat. Ogledi o spoljnoj politici Josipa Broza Tita 1944–1974* [Yugoslavia and the Cold War: essays on the foreign policy of Josip Broz Tito 1944–1974] (Arhipelag, 2014), 357–83.

8 = = DAMFA-PA-292/49410. Yugoslav views on the problems of European cooperation and security, n.d.

9 = = AY-803/608. On the eve of the pan-European in Helsinki, May 23, 1972.

The first comprehensive view of Yugoslav officials regarding the holding of the conference on European security was presented on July 25, 1969 in their response to the memorandum of the Finnish government, which at that time was sent to the governments of all European countries, the USA, and Canada.¹⁰ Namely, in the memorandum, dated May 5, 1969, the Finnish government had expressed its support for the initiative of Eastern European countries to hold the *Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe*. The memorandum had set out the principles on which the work of that Conference should be based, as well as Finland's proposal to host the Conference. In a letter to Finnish Prime Minister Urho Kekkonen, Yugoslavia resolutely supported the Finnish initiative and emphasized its readiness to "in accordance with its general policy of active peaceful coexistence and non-alignment [...] fully engage in efforts to establish an atmosphere of trust and develop broad and versatile cooperation based on the principles of the UN Charter." Insisting that the future Conference must be conceived in such a way as to ensure the reaffirmation of the principles within the UN Charter, the Yugoslav government at the same time considered it necessary to specify that it would be primarily about the principles for which all non-aligned states were persistently advocating: "primarily about the principle of sovereignty, independence, equality, refraining from the use of force or pressure in international relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries." From the Yugoslav side, the need to avoid bloc exclusivity during the preparations for the Conference and to ensure the equal participation of all European countries, regardless of their size and military and political power, was highlighted.¹¹

In the course of 1970, Yugoslavia sent the governments of European countries, the USA, and Canada a series of proposals related to issues of European security and cooperation, of which the Preliminary Draft Declaration on the Principles of European Cooperation and Security was particularly important. In that document, as in other Yugoslav proposals, several political premises were insisted upon that would determine the meaning and content of the Conference on European security. First of all, it was started from the point of view that the CSCE should be a gathering of sovereign states in which they would participate and decide on an equal basis, and that it should cover the issue of European security and cooperation in all its aspects, not only in those in which the blocs were currently interested. In this sense, the Conference had to represent an integral part and a factor in the process of radically transforming European relations, and not in the freezing of bloc divisions. In this way, the conditions would be created for the current, limited, bipolar détente

10 == Radovan Vukadinović, *Urho Kekkonen – borac za mir* [Urho Kekkonen – fighter for peace] (Globus, 1977), 134.

11 == DAMFA-PA-292/49418. The response of the Yugoslav government to the Memorandum of the Finnish government, July 25, 1969.

between the two superpowers to grow into a wider, universal détente and impose itself as a global process in which all states would be involved, and which would include all parts of the world and all important international problems.¹²

During the Preparatory Meeting in Helsinki, major differences surfaced in the initial negotiating positions of the participating states. They were so significant that for a long time it was not clear how an agreement would be reached. The differences were conditioned by the different specific interests and long-term strategic goals of those countries. The Warsaw Pact countries (except Romania) sought to sanction the territorial and political status quo in Eastern Europe at the future Conference. The NATO countries aimed to enable significant changes in Eastern Europe by improving détente, and thus to overcome the existing status quo in that area. Neutral and non-aligned countries (and above all Yugoslavia) saw in the Conference a solid framework for the improvement of the broader process of cooperation in Europe, as well as a significant change in the existing situation, with its accentuated bloc and Cold War characteristics. Therefore, the USSR and its allies wanted the consolidation and strengthening of the existing status quo; NATO wanted changes, but only on one side (in the East); and the non-bloc countries wanted radical changes on both sides of the bloc's demarcation line—that is, in Europe as a whole.¹³

During the Consultative Meeting, the Yugoslav delegation, together with a group of non-aligned and neutral European states, played a notable role in bridging the constant bloc exclusivity, which occasionally called into serious question the process of harmonizing the views of the Conference participants on the key issues of organizing this European gathering. The group of eight non-bloc states often assumed the role of an unavoidable mediator between the confronted blocs, but also that of a constructive initiator of a series of proposals that largely determined the content of the Conference and the adopted documents.¹⁴ After a six-month debate, the ambassadors of the thirty-four participating states¹⁵ adopted the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations. All European countries, except Albania and Monaco, participated in the Consultative Meeting in Helsinki. Monaco, however, joined the work of the CSCE as soon as the first phase of that meeting be-

12 = = AY-803/8. Draft SFRY Platform on European Security and cooperation n.d.; AY-837-I-2/63. Draft platform for the CSCE, June 26, 1973.

13 = = Gordon F. Sander, *The Finnish Front Line: Kekkonen, Kennedy, and Khrushchev's Cold War Showdown* (Cornell University Press, 2025), 332–45; Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 418–25.

14 = = Ranko Petković, *Aktivnost grupe neutralnih i nesvrstanih zemalja na KEBS-u* [Activity of the group of neutral and non-aligned countries at the CSCE] (FPZ, 1979), 106–11.

15 = = AY-803/608. Information on the positions of the participating countries at the Preparatory Conference in Helsinki on European cooperation and security, June 26, 1973.

gan, in July 1973. Albania was thus the only European country that refused to participate in the Conference. On several occasions, the Albanian government emphasized “that the initiators of the Conference are American imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, the very ones who keep alive the aggressive blocs, the NATO Pact and the Warsaw Pact.”¹⁶ Therefore, in Tirana they characterized the Conference as a “comedy that has the rhythm of a pacifist tam-tam superpower.” In the context of Albania’s withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and the evident attempt to approach Yugoslavia by warming up very complicated mutual relations, Yugoslav diplomacy considered such a stance of the Albanian government to be harmful not only to overall European security, but also to the prospects of bilateral relations—which for the Yugoslav side had not only regional, but exceptional internal importance.

In this sense, the first point of the agenda was reduced to the wording “the problem of security in Europe,” although the central issue was related to the inviolability and immutability of post-war borders: an issue that for years had driven Eastern European countries to push for the holding of this Conference. Namely, those countries saw the future, final act of the Conference as a substitute for the unrealized peace treaty with Germany. The Soviet Union and its allies wanted, through the solutions adopted at the European Conference, to end the territorial-political status quo in Europe. The second item on the agenda included the consideration of “the issue of cooperation in the field of economy, science and technology and protection of the human environment.” The central place on the agenda was actually held by the consideration of the problem of the “most favored nation clause”: concessions requested from Western countries by Eastern European countries and respect for the principle of full reciprocity in trade, which was in turn a condition of the West for providing the aforementioned concession to the East. Therefore, it was about improving the economic cooperation of European countries through the gradual neutralization of the negative effect of the regional closure of Western and Eastern European organizations (which the East insisted on) and the liberalization of the existing system of trade exchange (which was the demand of the West). And yet, in this sphere of negotiations, the negative effect of the ideological-political divergence among the bloc formations was felt very little, and the preliminary agreements on this topic were concluded relatively quickly and successfully in Helsinki—to which Yugoslav representatives made a notable contribution by insisting on universal principles.¹⁷

16 = = AY-837/I-3-a/148. Information on the position of the People’s Republic of Albania and relations with the SFR Yugoslavia after the aggression against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, July 8, 1973.

17 = = AY-837/I-2/63. On the results of the Preparatory Talks in Helsinki, August 1, 1973.

= = Conference After the Conference

The idea of a “conference after the conference” was conceived in Belgrade and strongly supported by a group of non-aligned and neutral states at the CSCE. During the Consultative Meeting in Helsinki, the Yugoslav delegation insisted that, after the Conference, the ongoing work of harmonizing opposing and discordant positions should be continued and that solutions should be found for new problems that would arise later. In doing so, it was based on the point of view that, for the effective implementation of the decisions of the Conference and their further development, it was necessary to form special bodies that would be in charge of this; they would monitor the process of realizing the mentioned decisions and schedule new meetings of the participating countries of the Conference, so that the action started in Helsinki would grow into a long-term process, and the Conference into an organization. Because of this performance of Yugoslavia during the preparations for the Conference and during its holding, and as a sign of recognition, a decision was made to hold the next gathering of European states in Belgrade during 1977, which would represent a kind of continuation of the Helsinki Conference.¹⁸ However, the Yugoslav initiative at the preparatory meeting in Helsinki—to consider the issue of the continuity of that Conference and the formation of institutional mechanisms for this purpose—was only partially accepted. Namely, it was agreed that this issue would be discussed at the Conference as part of the special, fourth item on the agenda. However, the wording related to that point of the agenda was extremely vague and general, so that in itself it did not hint at a later, more serious step forward in that context. It was actually about the reluctance of the bloc formations to make a more specific commitment regarding the future organized system of political negotiations in which all European states would be involved. While the Eastern European countries allowed the possibility of occasionally convening pan-European gatherings, the Western powers showed an extremely reserved attitude and opposed any solution that would lead to the institutionalization of this negotiation process.¹⁹ Incidentally, when it comes to the appearance of Yugoslavia together with a group of non-aligned and neutral countries during the Consultative Meeting in Helsinki, the result achieved during the adoption of the “democratic rules of procedure” is particularly noteworthy. In order to eliminate the possibility of overvoting and imposing decisions that would be of interest only to bloc formations, this group of countries insisted that all decisions be made solely on the basis of the rules of general agreement (consensus).²⁰

18 = = AY-837-I-2/63. On the results of the Preparatory Talks in Helsinki, August 1, 1973.

19 = = AY-837-I-2/63. Final recommendations from the Consultation in Helsinki, September 9, 1973.

20 = = AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the second phase of multilateral talks at the CSCE in Helsinki from 15 January to 9 February 1973.

The role of Yugoslavia and the non-aligned and neutral states in the formulation of the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations was particularly highlighted during the debate on the content of the agenda and priorities of the CSCE. Those countries insisted both on expanding the agenda to include military aspects of security in Europe, as well as on a comparative consideration and connection of military and political aspects of European security. (The bloc powers did not show interest in military issues being discussed at the Conference.) They believed that negotiations on disarmament should retain a narrower, bilateral character and that only representatives of bloc formations should participate in them. The inclusion of other European countries in the negotiations, in this sense, would only make it more difficult to achieve mutually acceptable compromises.²¹ Thanks to the aforementioned initiative, a special chapter was included in the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations, which provided for the adoption of “confidence-building measures”: prior notification of major military maneuvers by the countries participating in the Conference, exchange of observers at the maneuvers, notification of major troop movements, as well as consideration of political aspects of the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe.²² Yugoslavia opposed the efforts of the two blocs to limit the debate at the Conference to finding mutually acceptable compromises exclusively in relation to the narrower area of Central Europe.

At the Consultative Meeting in Helsinki, the representatives of Yugoslavia, Cyprus, and Malta insisted on the inclusion of the “Mediterranean component” in the concept of European security, given that it was difficult to achieve security in Europe in conditions when the Mediterranean was the scene of confrontation between the great powers and the focus of sharp local conflicts (e.g., the Middle East crisis, the Cyprus crisis). They advocated for universal solutions that would concern not only the strictly European area, but also the Balkans and the Mediterranean, as well as the area of the Middle East. Admittedly, the Yugoslav proposal to include non-European, Mediterranean countries in the work of the was not accepted. It was agreed, however, that those countries could participate in the part of the debate that would concern the security of the Mediterranean.²³

== The First Phase of the CSCE

The first phase of the CSCE was held in Helsinki from July 3 to 7, 1973 at the level of foreign ministers. A total of thirty-five countries officially accepted the invitation to participate in this four-day meeting (all European countries except Albania, which

21 == AY-837-I-2/63. Military aspects of European security, n.d.

22 == AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the multilateral preparatory talks for the CSCE, July 18, 1973.

23 == AY-837-I-2/63. Report on multilateral preparations for European Helsinki, 22 November 1972–8 June 1973.

did not even participate in the preparatory meeting). At the meeting, the text of the Final Recommendation of the Helsinki Consultation was formally adopted without any changes, and the general positions adopted at the Preparatory Meeting, which had ended a month before, were reaffirmed. The modalities of the procedure, general rules, agenda, and instructions for the working bodies of the Conference were adopted. The ministers of the participating countries submitted their proposals for texts for the preparation of documents for the next phase of the CSCE. When it came to the first item on the agenda (“the problem of security in Europe”), the most important items were the proposals concerning the preparation of the Conference’s basic document: on the “principles of relations between the participating states.” It is already noticeable at first sight that a compromise was reached between the position of the East on the inviolability of borders and the position of the West, which insisted on respecting the principles of human rights and basic freedoms. Both principles were included in the draft of the future declaration. The remaining principles, which to a greater or lesser extent were complementary to the aforementioned two, were included in the draft of the final act, partly thanks to the activities of the Yugoslav delegation. Namely, neutral and non-aligned countries supported the proposal of the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milos Minic, as set forth in the Yugoslav “draft declaration on the principles by which the participating countries are guided in their relations.”²⁴ Explaining the intention of this document, Minic emphasized the need to reaffirm the democratic principles of international relations on which the UN Charter is based. In proportion to the extent to which these principles were still current, the bloc division of the world and the efforts of the great powers to redraw the map of the world against the will of other countries seemed “outdated” and “anachronistic” to Minic. Minic’s performance was, in fact, a call for the construction of a new democratic system in Europe, in which the relations of European states would “rest on secure and permanent foundations, devoid of the current bloc division.”²⁵

During the first phase of the negotiations of the European countries, the foreign ministers decided that the CSCE should continue and that the second phase should begin in Geneva on September 18, 1973. The expert bodies that were to take on the role of negotiators were instructed to prepare proposals for final documents based on the Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations, so that those documents could be adopted in the third phase of the CSCE, in Helsinki. Political circles in Belgrade estimated that the first phase of the CSCE—the ministerial meeting in Helsinki—represented only a “starting point” in the European negotiation process

24 == AY-837-I-2/63. Draft SFRY platform on European security and cooperation, July 3, 1973.

25 == AY-837-I-2/63. Speech of the Vice President of the Federal Executive Council and the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the SFRY Miloš Minic at the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, within the first phase of CSCE, Helsinki, July 5, 1973.

and a “quick compromise at the ministerial level,” which only defined the main issues to be discussed but not the framework solutions. Instead of a working document that was supposed to be sent to experts for refinement during the second phase of the CSCE, the foreign ministers in Helsinki made only a list of a series of controversial issues—little more than an elaborate agenda.

= = The Second Phase of the CSCE

The second phase of CSCE began in Geneva on September 18, 1973, and ended on July 21, 1975. The delegations were supposed to elaborate and concretize the Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations and enable their final formulation in the form of a proposal for the Final Document—that is, the draft conclusions of the CSCE. It consisted of about four groups of proposals and conclusions that included: (1) military-political security and cooperation; (2) economic, scientific and technological cooperation; (3) cooperation in the field of human contact, information, culture and education; and (4) continuity of the Conference. This formal start of the second phase was preceded, in the period between August 29 and September 3, 1973, by several sessions of the highest organ of the CSCE: the Coordination Committee. At those meetings, it was relatively easy to reach an agreement that the work of the Conference should take place in four committees, formed according to the already defined basic areas of the agenda.²⁶

However, the consideration of another issue that came before the Coordination Committee—one which concerned the implementation of the principled decision to invite non-European Mediterranean countries to participate in the Conference (which was particularly insisted on by the non-aligned countries Yugoslavia, Cyprus, and Malta) turned out to be much more difficult. This issue was also the subject of dispute during the first phase of negotiations in Helsinki. Nevertheless, the problem was solved by adopting a compromise, which was made official immediately after the opening of the second phase of negotiations. The Western countries agreed that the Arab Mediterranean countries—Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and Tunisia—would participate in the CSCE, but under the condition (which was accepted by other European countries) that Israel also participate in the meeting.²⁷

The Yugoslav delegation, headed by the advisor to the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Djuro Nincic, had obviously been instructed by its government that it must be active in all phases of the general debate on all relevant issues on the agenda, and at the same time, that it must be present in all areas of the preparation of the final document. Therefore, during the meeting in Geneva, the Yugoslav delegation submitted a whole series of proposals and launched a series of

26 = = AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the CSCE, September 8, 1973.

27 = = DAMFA-PA/1973-176/41359. The Mediterranean Problem. Information on the work so far of the II phase of the CSCE, December 19, 1973.

initiatives, attempting to promote the Yugoslav foreign policy priorities and goals for which the Non-Aligned Movement stood. To this end, within the first item of the agenda Yugoslavia submitted a draft declaration on the principles that would guide the participating states in their relations (submitted in Helsinki and renewed in Geneva), a draft resolution on military aspects of security (a joint proposal with Austria, Finland, Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Switzerland, and Sweden), a draft resolution on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean (drafted together with Cyprus and Malta), a draft resolution on colonialism, and a draft declaration on national minorities. As part of the second item on the agenda, it submitted the following proposals: a draft resolution on the cooperation of participating countries with developing countries, a proposal on industrial cooperation and projects of common interest, and a proposal on solving issues related to worker migration. And, finally, within the fourth point of the agenda, the Yugoslav delegation submitted a draft resolution on the continuity of CSCE.²⁸

Regardless of the extremely wide field of activities of the Yugoslav representatives to CSCE, the officials from Belgrade attached special importance to undoubtedly the most sensitive issue at the Conference, which already had a central place at the very beginning of the debate in Geneva and which was already resolved during the first part of the editorial work in the committees. It was the matter of borders. This issue became particularly relevant for Yugoslavia, since it was at the time of the Conference in Geneva that new tensions arose in Yugoslav-Italian relations regarding the provisional border in the Trieste region, established by the London memorandum in August 1954.²⁹ The renewed escalation of the Trieste crisis reached its apogee in the spring of 1974. The Yugoslav-Italian dispute gradually assumed the shape of a serious conflict in the Yugoslavia–NATO relationship. Such a turn of events occurred because precisely at this time, the NATO amphibious force maneuvers were organized in the area of the Gulf of Trieste. Yugoslav diplomatic officials had repeatedly accused the USA and NATO of siding with the Italian side by deciding to take action at a time when the crisis in this area was dangerously escalating. From that moment on, the dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy acquired a new, wider dimension and an even more serious character. In this sense, the position on the inviolability of borders implied the need to regulate the current border with Italy.³⁰

28 == AY-837-I-2/63. Issues related to security and cooperation in the Mediterranean, December 12, 1973.

29 == For more on the Yugoslav-Italian border conflict of 1974–75, see Saša Mišić, *Pomirenje na Jadranu: Jugoslavija i Italija na putu ka Osimskim sporazumima iz 1975* [Reconciliation on the Adriatic: Yugoslavia and Italy on the road to the 1975 Osim Accords] (FPN, 2018).

30 == Aleksandar Životić, "The Soviet Union and Yugoslav-Italian Détente (1968-1973)," in *Italy and Tito's Yugoslavia in the Age of International Détente*, ed. Massimo Bucarelli et al. (Peter Lang, 2015), 37–49.

On the question of the inviolability of the borders, at the outset there was a sharp polarization of the bloc viewpoints. Eastern European countries insisted that the existing borders, established after the Second World War, must be respected and must not be changed under any conditions. This proclaimed not only the principle of the inviolability of borders, but also the principle of their immutability. The West, on the other hand, advocated the point of view that the possibility of changing the borders by legal means (through international agreements) should be retained and “that the question of the definitiveness of the existing borders should be left open,” which implicitly suggested the provisionality of the demarcation line of individual states. The members of the European Economic Community had in mind, above all, the option of later German unification, but also the vision of the territorial integration of Western Europe. Such an option, of course, was not acceptable to the leaders of the Eastern Bloc, precisely because it hinted at the possibility of the unification of the two German states through an agreement of the legitimate representatives of the German people (against the will of the Soviet Union). On the other hand, the solution advocated by the West did not lead to a permanent multilateral fixing of the current border between Poland and Germany (the border between East and West), which was the main reason Eastern European countries had initiated and were participating in the Conference.³¹

Yugoslavia was strongly against the solution advocated by most Western countries. Such a possible solution was interpreted within Yugoslav diplomatic circles as the existence of a new agreement on the territorial situation in Europe at some stage. The insistence on provisional borders was particularly unacceptable to Yugoslavia at a time when Italy contested the international legal status of its border with Yugoslavia. On the other hand, in Belgrade it was believed that it was impossible to freeze a specific situation once and for all in each individual case. Therefore, the Yugoslav delegation proposed a compromise formulation acceptable to both parties (i.e., both NATO and the Warsaw Pact). That formulation, supported by the other non-bloc states and Romania, was based on the imperative to preserve the inviolability of the existing borders (any possibility of violently changing the borders was excluded), but at the same time it allowed for the possibility of changing the borders in specific cases by agreement of all interested actors. With minor corrections, this solution was included in the Final Document from Helsinki.³²

The disagreement between the East and the West, which resulted in a month-long blockade of the work of the Conference, was overcome with the help and mediation of eight neutral and non-aligned countries (Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Cyprus, and Yugoslavia). These countries proposed

31 == DAMFA-PA/1974/176/417633. The principle of inviolability border (Information of the SFRY delegation on the work of phase II CSCE), January 15–April 6, 1974.

32 == AY-803/26. The possibility of changing borders by agreement, March 14, 1974.

a balanced and realistic arrangement that was acceptable to both parties. Namely, the “protective provisions,” insisted on by the bloc of pro-Soviet states, were included in the first principle of the Declaration on the principles of relations between participating states – in the principle of sovereign equality and explicitly included in the preamble of the “third basket.”³³

The tactics of the two sides and their reluctance to take the first step toward an acceptable compromise hinted at a new blockage in the work of the CSCE. Although that blockade was eventually removed after a several-month standstill, the pressure of time took its toll. Both groups were undoubtedly interested in the successful conclusion of the negotiations and the codification of part of their demands as part of the Final Document. Elements of a compromise solution were found in the revised Yugoslav proposal for military measures, submitted by a group of six neutral and non-aligned countries (Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Austria, Cyprus, and Yugoslavia) and with the strong support of Romania. In the original version of its proposal (devoid of any numerical parameters), Yugoslavia insisted on reaching an agreement on limiting some types of military activities in Europe and on starting negotiations on the reduction of armaments and military personnel. This meant the following: limiting military maneuvers in politically and strategically sensitive regions of Europe; banning the use of international waters and international airspace for the demonstration of armed force on the borders of sovereign states; refraining from the use of military force; and agreeing to stop the escalation of the military presence on European soil. Those views were formulated as early as 1970 and consistently propagated during the first phase of the CSCE. That proposal included “confidence-building measures”: prior notification of major military maneuvers and troop movements in Europe; inviting foreign parties to those maneuvers; observing the notification of neighboring countries about smaller maneuvers; refraining from all types of mutual military activities that cause mutual distrust and tensions; and the publication of general data on mutual military budgets.³⁴ The second part of the proposal referred to the principles by which the participating states of the Conference should be guided in negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments.³⁵ It was actually about the principles for the codification of which Yugoslavia advocated throughout the Conference, despite the strong resistance of the bloc states. The purpose of this Yugoslav action was to include the participating countries of the CSCE in the military negotiations and to limit the previous exclusive monopoly of the two superpowers to conduct

33 == AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the CSCE, May 11, 1974.

34 == DAMFA-PA/1974/176/417633. Information from the SFRY delegation on the work of the II phase of CSCE, June 1, 1974.

35 == *Konferencija o evropskoj bezbednosti i saradnji. Dokumenti: 1975–1995* [Conference on European Security and Cooperation. Documents: 1975–1995], 22.

negotiations on all key military issues and disarmament in strict secrecy: alone or in the inner circle of their bloc allies. Yugoslav officials saw this in the fact that other countries were completely excluded from those negotiations.³⁶

Thanks to the increasingly aggressive performance of the group of neutral and non-aligned countries at the CSCE, during the second phase of negotiations in Geneva, a special chapter was included in the Final Document, dedicated to issues of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean area. With this, the agenda of the Conference was expanded to include another topic (the “fifth basket”), which Yugoslavia had insisted on from the very beginning. This was in the spirit of the Yugoslav thesis about the “indivisibility of peace,” often emphasized by Tito in his public speeches. He pointed out that crisis hotspots from the Mediterranean and the Middle East, as well as from the entire Afro-Asian area, could spread to Europe in the shortest possible time, “that Europe cannot be an island of tranquility and well-being in a sea of world instability,” and that “Europe cannot seek solutions to the vital issues of its security and prosperity by closing in on itself, because that would inevitably lead to its political and economic degradation.”³⁷ The Yugoslav representatives insisted that the rules from the declaration on the principles of relations between the countries participating in the Conference must also apply in the relations of those countries with Mediterranean countries not participating in the Conference. Such Yugoslav attitudes during the CSCE were strongly supported by two non-aligned European states—Cyprus and Malta—and later by all neutral European states.³⁸ In the spirit of an integral treatment of European and Mediterranean security, a kind of precedent was set in the work of the Conference. Namely, five Mediterranean, non-European countries participated in the drafting of a special chapter in the Final Act, dedicated to the Mediterranean: Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria.³⁹

In an effort to promote the premises and principles of the policy of non-alignment during the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the members of the Yugoslav delegation were the bearers of a whole series of initiatives aimed at the adoption of certain formulations in the Final Document that would link the issue of European security with the “removal of the bloc division of the world.” At the same time, Yugoslavia tried in every way to free the European negotiation process from regional dimensions and give it a broader, universal character. Such a strategy resulted from the decisions and documents adopted at the Non-Aligned Summit in Algeria, held at the same time as the First Conference on

36 == AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the CSCE, June 8, 1974.

37 == AY-837-I-2/63. President’s speech at the CSCE in Helsinki, July 31, 1975.

38 == DAMFA-PA/1975/177/436559. Military aspects of security, n.d.

39 == AY-837-I-2/63. Issues related to security and cooperation in the Mediterranean, August 4, 1975.

European Security and Cooperation (September 1973). The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milos Minic, reported in detail to his associates about the intention of the Yugoslav delegation's performance in this way at the meetings of the Presidency of the SFRY and the meetings of the innermost party leadership. The backbone of these initiatives lay in the relationship between the CSCE and the Summit in Algeria: in the effort of the Yugoslav delegates to emphasize "that we have a unique non-aligned policy; that our European policy is an integral part of this unique non-aligned foreign policy; that our positions in Helsinki must be based on the same basis as our positions in Algeria; that we do not have one position for Helsinki and another position for Algeria."⁴⁰

Since one of the main outcomes of the Algerian summit was the decision to initiate international action with the aim of radically transforming the system of international economic relations and mitigating the growing gap that divided the rich North from the poor South, Yugoslavia asserted itself at the CSCE as the main proponent of this idea. It was encouraged by the fact that the UN General Assembly, at the Extraordinary Session in 1974 (on the initiative of non-aligned countries), adopted the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. However, these efforts by Yugoslavia, due to the strong opposition of the Western countries, did not bear fruit. All that discussion, conducted as part of the second item on the agenda ("issues of cooperation in the field of economy, science and technology and protection of the human environment"), largely came down to the need to provide the conditions for the most generous aid from rich Western countries to "European and non-European developing countries." Since the West did not clearly show an inclination to assume the role of such a generous benefactor, the debate was, firstly, narrowed down to the "European South" (to the economic problem of "less-developed European countries"), and then reduced to general declarative formulations that did not oblige anyone to take concrete measures in that context.⁴¹

= = The Final Document of the Conference

Although the work on shaping the Final Document of the CSCE was finally coming to an end during June 1975, issues related to the fourth item on the agenda—the continuity of the Conference—remained the only sphere in which editorial work was not carried out. Until the end of the second phase of the Conference, NATO members maintained an extremely reserved position on this issue, opposing any solution that would imply institutionalization—that is, reorgani-

40 = = AY-803/17. Presentation by the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Miloš Minic, Tape recording of the XXI session of the Presidency of the SFRY, held on June 25, 1973.

41 = = DAMFA-PA/1975/177/436559. Yugoslav initiatives at CSCE, September 20, 1975.

zation of the negotiation process initiated at the CSCE. The countries of the Warsaw Pact, with the exception of Romania, held a similar attitude, although they allowed the possibility of convening new pan-European meetings.⁴²

The only real supporters of the continuation of the negotiation process on the security of Europe even after the end of the CSCE were, in fact, the neutral and non-aligned states and Romania. Their starting point in the matter of continuity mainly stemmed from the Yugoslav proposal formulated in March 1974 during the second phase of the Conference. The essence of that proposal consisted of the request for the establishment of a permanent, pan-European body (Permanent Council), which would coordinate and initiate the activities of European countries in the direction of implementation and realization of the decisions adopted at the CSCE. The non-bloc countries expressed their fear that in the absence of a decision on preserving the continuity of the Conference, the negotiation process of the European states now underway would be shut down, and that the process of détente in Europe would once again be reduced to negotiations and agreements of the blocs. The neutral and non-aligned countries undoubtedly felt much safer and more secure while all European states, plus the USA and Canada, sat together at the negotiating table. Therefore, for them, the adequate resolution of this fourth item on the agenda was of utmost importance.⁴³

However, due to the strong resistance of the bloc powers, the idea of continuity was only partially accepted and formulated in a general way within the Final Document. Nevertheless, the possibility was left that after the CSCE, periodic meetings of representatives of the foreign ministries of the participating countries would be held, with the decision on the final solution to the issue of continuity being postponed for the first meeting of this kind in Belgrade, in mid-1977. The position was adopted that the next meeting of CSCE in Belgrade should be held first at the level of experts, and subsequently at the level of representatives of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁴

It was on the night of July 20/21, 1975 that the question of continuity was “taken off” the agenda, and the unexpectedly long second phase of the CSCE was finally completed. The next phase lasted only three days. It was held from July 30 to August 1, 1975, in Helsinki’s “Finlandia” palace. It had a mostly ceremonial character and was reduced to the formal adoption of the decisions made and the signing of the final documents by the heads of states participating in the meeting.⁴⁵ It was opened by the president of the host country, Urho Kekkonen, in the presence

42 == AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the CSCE, October 13, 1975

43 == AY-837-I-2/63. Report on the CSCE, Continuity Conferences, 8 August 1975.

44 == DAMFA-PA/1975/181/437435. Continuity and further tasks. CSCE, September 30, 1975.

45 == DAMFA-PA/1975/181/437-439. Information about the III phase of CSCE, held in Helsinki from July 30 to August 1, 1975

of the highest representatives of European countries, the USA, and Canada. “Europe is entering a new era,” said the Finnish president, then added: “This Conference is unique and incomparable with anything previous in the history of Europe.”⁴⁶

All the leaders of the countries participating in the CSCE unanimously supported the statement of the Finnish president. In his speech, Josip Broz Tito, on the other hand, emphasized the terms of the Conference that Yugoslavia had particularly pushed for in Helsinki. He characterized the CSCE as a “democratic dialogue of equal participants, both big and small” and expressed his belief that this meeting would be recorded in history both as a “turning point in Europe’s turning toward coexistence and peace,” but also as a meeting “of importance not only for Europe, but also for the whole world.” The Conference “must not represent the end, but only the beginning of a process,” Tito pointed out.⁴⁷

That said, Tito and his collaborators saw the basic weakness of the Final Act from Helsinki in the fact that, given that it represented a compromise of three global political approaches (East, West, and Third World), it was too general, broadly formulated, imprecise, vague, and based on half-hearted solutions. That seemed understandable to some extent, because the complex matter that was discussed required that a general agreement in principle be reached first, only then moving on to its concretization. Therefore, great hopes were placed on the next meeting in Belgrade in 1977, at which one could expect concrete treatment of each special group of issues that were tentatively regulated by the Helsinki Final Act.⁴⁸

=== Conclusion

The hopes of Yugoslav officials and other European non-aligned or neutral countries—regarding the expediency and efficiency of the continuous and organized performance of CSCE participants—did not come true and did not prove to be realistic. In this sense, the Belgrade Conference in 1977 had an exclusively demonstrative character and made no essential contribution to the resolution of any significant issue that was on the agenda. The outcome of subsequent conferences on European security and cooperation was similar. The return of interventionism on the European political scene demanded new answers from Yugoslavia. The normalization of Yugoslav-Soviet relations after a sudden complication (due to harsh Yugoslav criticism of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia) coincided with the establishment of a global political atmosphere of détente, as well as with the increasingly visible determination of the Yugoslav leadership to build a new model

46 == AY-837-I-2/63. The third phase of CSCE Notes on preparations for the third phase of the CSCE, November 9, 1975.

47 == AY-837-I-2/63. President Tito’s speech at the CSCE in Helsinki, July 31, 1975.

48 == DAMFA-PA/1976/184/450704. Some current questions about the implementation of the Final Document of the Helsinki Conference and the Belgrade meeting of CSCE, February 23, 1976.

of national security within the framework of achieving pan-European security, which paved the way for the European Conference on Security and Cooperation. During the Conference in Helsinki from July 1973 to August 1975, Yugoslavia, together with a group of European non-aligned and neutral countries, made significant contributions toward freeing this Conference from the antagonistic frame of bloc confrontations and toward approaching the solution of key international problems through democratic dialogue of the participants. The Yugoslav government placed great importance on the outcome of the CSCE, because they believed that this meeting could potentially play a very important role: both within the reaffirmation of the basic premise of the policy of non-alignment, as well as in the efforts to strengthen the European component of Yugoslav foreign policy. Yugoslavia showed a special interest in solving questions of the inviolability of borders and provided a favorable outcome for the debate on the necessity of linking the questions of European security with the security of the Mediterranean.

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Keywords

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