

*The Foreign Office on Yugoslavia and the First Congress of the Non-Aligned Movement (1961)**

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Fifty years ago, between 1–6 September 1961, twenty-five heads of state and prime ministers of the developing world gathered in Belgrade to participate at the first summit of the non-aligned states and discuss the relevant global issues and problems trying to provide an alternative to the East–West bipolar stand-off. Based on the records of the Foreign Office of the United Kingdom, my aim in this article is to analyse the way the Foreign Office perceived and evaluated Yugoslavia's role and Yugoslav Premier Josip Broz Tito's performance before and during the conference; the short and long range conclusion British diplomats deduced from the Belgrade meeting and their concern about how the meeting would affect Yugoslav–Western relations. Although the restrictions on the length of this article do not allow me to deal with all aspects of the conference in detail, I will also briefly touch upon the Foreign Office's attitude to the non-aligned movement in general. As it is well known, India and Egypt, leaders of the movement, as well as Yugoslavia, had traditionally played an important role in British strategic thinking, but, after 1948 Yugoslav–British relations also re-developed, as a direct consequence of the the Soviet–Yugoslav quarrel.¹

Although the escalation of the Cold War after World War II split the world into two political, military and ideological blocs, with the emergence of decolonization and the gradual dissolution of the former empires, new, powerful forces appeared on the world's political stage. The newly independent former African and Asian colonies (17 colonies became independent on the black continent in 1960, in the „year of Africa” itself) did not want to belong to any of the military blocs. Instead, emphasizing their intention not to join

* The research at the National Archives – Public Records Office on which this paper is based was financially supported by the Hungarian State Eötvös Scholarship of the Hungarian Scholarship Board in 2011. The writing of this article took place under the project named "TÁMOP-4.2.1/B-09/1/KONV-2010-0005 – Creating the Centre of Excellence at the University of Szeged" supported by the European Union and co-financed by the European Social Fund.

¹ For British–Yugoslav relations between 1948–1953 see: ANN LANE: *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity, 1941–1949*. Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 1996. ID.: Coming to Terms with Tito: Britain and Yugoslavia, 1945–1949. In: RICHARD J. ALDRICH – MICHAEL F. HOPKINS (eds.): *Intelligence, Defence and Diplomacy: British Policy in the Post-War World*. Ilford – Portland, Frank Cass, 1994. 13–41. In Hungarian: VUKMAN PÉTER: „Tito felszínén tartása”: Nagy-Britannia szerepe Jugoszlávia gazdasági megsegítésében (1948–1953) [Britain's Role in Providing Economic Assistance to Yugoslavia, 1948–1953]. *Külpolitika*, 2009/4. 110–129. and Uó.: Brit katonai segély Jugoszláviának és a háromhatalmi–jugoszláv tárgyalások (1950–1953) [British Military Assistance to Yugoslavia and the Tripartite–Yugoslav Negotiations, 1950–1953]. *Világtörténet*, 2010/1-2. 20–35.

either the Soviet or the American military alliances, they wanted to make a profit out of the Soviet–American rivalry. The so called non-aligned movement originated in the early 1950s, when, on 12 December 1952, 12 African and Asian countries declared their independent stance on the East–West conflict. Two years later, on 28 June 1954, Zhou Enlai (1949–1976) and Jawarharlal Nehru (1947–1964), the Chinese and the Indian prime minister, respectively, defined the five principles of peaceful co-existence (*Pancha Sila*), later amplified in ten points in the final communiqué of the Bandung Conference of twenty-nine Afro–Asian countries on 24 April 1955.² During the annual session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1960, the representatives of India, the United Arab Republic, Ghana, Indonesia and Yugoslavia urged Soviet party secretary Khrushchev and US president John F. Kennedy in a joint proposal to meet as soon as possible.³ The next step in the institutionalization of the so called Bandung spirit was the first congress of the heads of state and government of the non-aligned movement, that took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Besides the Indian prime minister and the young and vigorous Gamal Abdel Nasser, Yugoslav premier Josip Broz Tito also played an important role in the formulation of the movement. After the outbreak of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict in 1948 and the rapid deterioration of the bilateral relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet orbit, Stalin condemned Tito and the Yugoslav leadership heretic and excommunicated them from the Socialist camp. Moreover, as the withdrawal of Soviet military and civilian experts (18–19 March 1948) coincided with the American and British declaration on Trieste (20 March 1948) Yugoslavia found itself without allies. Although the Yugoslav leadership formulated its new main long term aim in foreign policy, i. e. its equidistance from both the Soviet Union and the United States a little later,⁴ the economic blockade of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, the danger of domestic instability following a severe drought and the outbreak of famine in some parts of the country, together with the Soviet war of nerves, and the fear from a possible Soviet military attack forced Tito to re-establish contacts with the Western powers, especially the United States and Great Britain. Although former Yugoslav ambassador to India Josip Djerdja suggested as early as in 1951 that India might serve as a way out from isolation for Yugoslavia, and even if Tito immediately identified himself with Djerdja's suggestion,⁵ they had to wait until Stalin's death in 1953 to put this

² FISCHER FERENC: *A megosztott világ. A Kelet-Nyugat, Észak-Dél nemzetközi kapcsolatok fő vonásai (1945–1989) [The Divided World. Main Aspects of East-West, North-South International Relations, 1945–1989]*. Budapest, IKVA, 1992. 180–181., 209. The full text of the Pancha Sila can be found in *United Nations Treaty Series*, volume 299. United Nations, New York, 1958. 70. Available on the Internet: <http://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20299/v299.pdf>. For the Final Communiqué of the Bandung Conference see: <http://fds.oup.com/www.oup.co.uk/pdf/bt/cassese/cases/part3/ch18/1702.pdf>. Both retrieved on 19 January 2012.

³ ALVIN Z. RUBINSTEIN: *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970. 104.

⁴ SVETOZAR RAJAK: *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War. Reconciliation, comradeship, confrontation, 1953–1957*. London – New York, Routledge, 2011. 98–99. Rajak gives a detailed analysis on the Yugoslav role in the formulation of the non-aligned movement on pages 98–107 and 205–210.

⁵ For a detailed analysis see: SVETOZAR RAJAK: In search of a life outside the two blocs: Yugoslavia's road to non-alignment. In: LJUBODRAG DIMIC (ed.): *Great powers and small countries in Cold War*,

principle into practice. As the new Soviet leadership lowered the pressure on Yugoslavia, Tito and the Yugoslav leadership had better prospects for manoeuvring. The Yugoslavs took advantage of the increasing scope for action and formulated alliances with numerous third world countries between 1954–1959. During the winter of 1954–1955 Tito made a long visit to India and Burma, and hosted Nehru and Nasser on the Adriatic island of Brioni on 18–19 July 1956. The term non-alignment was created during their discussions there.⁶ As a consequence of the deteriorating Soviet–Yugoslav party relations after the Soviet troops had suppressed the Hungarian revolution of 1956, Tito turned to the third world again and, together with Nehru, Nasser and Sukarno (president of Indonesia between 1945–1967) endeavoured to operate the movement more efficiently and to give more self-confidence to enforce their interests.⁷ He therefore left for a three-month trip in December 1958 during which he visited Indonesia, Burma, India, Ceylon (today Sri Lanka), Ethiopia, the Sudan and the United Arab Republic. He made a similar trip to Northern and Western Africa during the spring of 1961.⁸ Having arrived back to Belgrade, he announced the convocation of the conference of non-aligned countries.

The strategists at the Permanent Under-secretary Department of the Foreign Office produced an analysis on the role neutral countries were playing in the Cold War long before Tito's announcement. Their confident report, dated 30 January 1961, distinguished between *neutral* and *neutralist* countries. They used the first, wider category for countries, such as Sweden, Ireland and Indonesia, that did not officially belong to any of the superpower blocs (*neutral states*), while the economically underdeveloped countries, often with a colonial background, belonged to the other, narrower category (*neutralist states*). The strategists defined the notion of positive neutralism, later widely used by the non-aligned movement, as a subcategory of this latter group. The Foreign Office interpreted the term as such an active force in international politics, which would 'contract out of the East–West struggle' and therefore 'prevent the complete polarisation of the world into two camps'. Although the paper frequently described Nasser and Nehru, champions of the neutralist states, as the 'virulent critics of the West', the analysts did not regard their anti-western stance as an inevitable characteristics, partly because their explicit and unambiguous pro-Soviet commitment would in itself contradict to the notion of neutralism. Although the paper also dealt with the possibility of binding these countries to the Western democratic camp (and considered this the most optimistic scenario), the diplomats were realistic enough to

1945–1955. Filozofski fakultet, Beograd, 2005. 84–105. For a Hungarian review of the article: VUKMAN PÉTER: Svetozar Rajak: Új szövetségesek keresése: Jugoszlávia és az el nem kötelezett államok [Svetozar Rajak: In Search of New Allies. Yugoslavia and Non-Alignment]. *Klió*, 2007/3. 148–155.

⁶ RUBINSTEIN: i. m. 75. For the role Tito and Nasser played in the formulation of the non-aligned movement in detail see: DRAGAN BOGETIĆ – ALEKSANDAR ŽIVOTIĆ: *Jugoslavija i arapsko-izraelski rat, 1967*. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2010. 67–81. For Yugoslav-Burmese relations see: JOVAN ČAVOŠKI: *Arming Nonalignment. Yugoslavia's Relations With Burma and the Cold War in Asia (1950–1955)*. Cold War International History Project, Working Papers, No. 61. Washington, 2011.

⁷ JUHÁSZ JÓZSEF: *Volt egyszer egy Jugoszlávia. A délszláv állam története [Once There Was Yugoslavia. History of A South Slavic Country]*. Budapest, Aula, 1999. 184.

⁸ RUBINSTEIN: i. m. 92. Tito's visit is examined in detail in: DRAGAN BOGETIĆ: *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956–1961*. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2006. 314–342.

consider the long-range independence of the neutralist countries as a fact. They also expressed their opinion that British foreign policy should, at least in public, emphasise the importance of their independence and neutrality, and the importance of providing sufficient educational and technical aid. As a consequence, the report concluded that the neutralist *bloc* 'though it will grow in size and influence, is unlikely ever to become a really cohesive force'. It is surprising, though, that this lengthy, nine-page-long report mentioned Yugoslavia only once, as an independent Communist state with whom Great Britain managed to establish 'reasonably good working relations'.⁹

Still, the Foreign Office was the first time thoroughly informed about Tito's intention to summon a conference of neutralist states to Yugoslavia on 25 May 1961 from one of the telegrams the British embassy in Belgrade sent to London. According to the telegram, a British diplomat gathered from a reliable source from the Yugoslav foreign ministry that the Yugoslav leadership was thinking about inviting twenty heads of state and government, among them four delegations from Latin-America, eight-nine delegations from various countries in Africa and the Near East, and three or four delegations from Asia, and wished to discuss what positive role neutralist states could play in reducing the tension between the American and the Soviet blocs. They also wanted to deal with disarmament and the changing role of the United Nations where the Yugoslavs wanted a stronger and more lasting cooperation of the member states.¹⁰

At the same time (on 24 and 26 May), the Foreign Office learned from Yugoslav and Indian foreign sources that the meeting of the heads of state and government was planned to take place sometime at the end of July or early August. Although the British diplomats in Belgrade and New Delhi did not exclude the theoretical possibility that the conference would take place somewhere in Yugoslavia, they found it reasonable that the meeting would take place either in Egypt (probably at Alexandria), or in New Delhi or in Bandung, Indonesia.¹¹ British High Commissioner to New Delhi Vincent Coelho gathered from a leading Indian diplomat that Nehru, for domestic reasons (because of the coming parliamentary elections), was particularly interested in organising the conference in the Indian capital.¹² Still, the preliminary conference, which opened in Cairo on 5 June decided in favour of Yugoslavia, about which British ambassador to the Egyptian capital, Sir Harold Beeley (1961–1964) cabled to London on 10 June. Based on the information members of the Yugoslav delegation provided him, Beeley expected that the conference would take place at the well-known Slovenian resort, Bled,¹³ but it became evident a few

⁹ The National Archives – Public Records Office, London, United Kingdom. Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966. (Henceforward: PRO FO) 371/161211 WP 13/4.

¹⁰ PRO FO 371/161211 WP 13/9.

¹¹ PRO FO 371/161211 WP 13/13 and WP 13/14. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also expected that the conference would take place in an Egyptian city. National Archives of Hungary. Papers of the Foreign Office. Administrative Papers (1945-1964), Yugoslavia. MOL XIX-J-1-k-Jugoszlávia-11/i.-3843/1 (box 24).

¹² PRO FO 371/161211 WP 13/13.

¹³ PRO FO 371/161212 WP 13/26.

days later that meetings would rather take place in the capital, in the building of the federal parliament.¹⁴

The many differences, disputes and misunderstandings that occurred during the preparation of the Belgrade conference reached the British diplomats through different sources and through different channels. Based on this information, British diplomats reasoned that the differences had two main interconnected sources: how many countries should be invited and what views should be presented at the conference. The case of Algeria, Cuba and Congo in particular resulted in heated debates. It was one of the most important issues on the Cairo preliminary conference of 5–13 June, too, as British ambassador Harold Beeley referred about it to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sir Alec Douglas-Home (1960–1963) in his confident letter on 17 June 1961. According to Beeley, the moderate countries, led by India, 'took the view that the concept of non-alignment should be interpreted as flexible as possible' and intended to use the conference as a forum at which 'the major problems confronting the world could be discussed with a view to producing constructive suggestions for easing international tension'. On the other hand, extremists led by Ghana insisted on 'a narrow and rigid definition of non-alignment' reducing the focus of the conference to colonial matters, and wanted to give voice to their own regional and particular grievances and were indifferent to other, more global problems of the Cold War. Beeley also noticed that the Yugoslav and Indonesian delegations 'adopted an attitude of some aloofness', but rendered that 'their sympathies were possibly with the Indians'.¹⁵

As the time of the conference was approaching, British diplomats took note that the Yugoslav government developed a more flexible and more constructive approach to the problem. Tito often accepted the moderate Nehru's argument not to let the conference "degenerate" into colonial agitation. The British embassy in Belgrade thought on 26 July 1961 that Tito, having learnt from the failure of the Cairo conference, would in any case strengthen the moderate camp. He would certainly be interested in a successful conference, both as a host and both as the father of the idea: 'the Yugoslavs are, I think, probably at present occupying a fairly central position. [...] The comparatively cautious Yugoslav attitude is certainly in part due to the fact that the meeting was, after all, very much their own idea, and that they are also the hosts.' According to the British diplomats, this intention could be deduced from the fact that the Yugoslavs intended the conference not to be longer than five days, which, taking twenty to thirty member countries in account, would 'not allow much time for serious discussion'. No doubt, it would reduce the possibility of confrontation, too.¹⁶

The British diplomatic records also reveal that British and Yugoslav diplomats met more frequently as the date of the conference approached, especially from the middle of August. Based on the reports of the British diplomats in Belgrade about their discussions with their Yugoslav counterparts, the Foreign Office had the impression that Tito and the Yugoslav leadership wanted to put the following topics high on the conference's agenda: disarmament, prohibition of nuclear tests, the Soviet proposal for the restructuring of the UN and colonialism. The Yugoslav diplomats often elaborated on their view about the

¹⁴ PRO FO 371/161212 WP 13/34.

¹⁵ PRO FO 371/161212 WP 13/37.

¹⁶ PRO FO 371/161215 WP 13/93.

German question to the British, which suggests that they were particularly interested in the British attitude in this question. The diplomats at the Foreign Office were well aware of that fact, too: at the margins on the reports about British–Yugoslav discussions they regularly expressed their hope that at least 'some of [the British position] is going to Belgrade'.¹⁷

Based on the relevant papers of the Foreign Office, the incoming and outgoing telegrams of the British delegation to the NATO headquarters in Paris, as well as the exchange of letters between the Foreign Office and its foreign representations, I presume that the biggest dilemma the British diplomacy was facing at the beginning of the summer was how to urge the moderate countries to participate at the conference without being accused of trying to influence the outcome of the Belgrade summit. The British diplomats repeatedly discussed this question with the United States and their western allies in the Political Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty. As British ambassador to NATO Frank Stanley Tomlinson (1961–1964) expounded at the meeting on 20 June, Britain and the western powers were unable to influence who would be invited to the conference, still, his argument went, they should discreetly put some pressure on those already invited: 'I said [underlined in the original, V. P.] that the degree to which the Conference would be harmful to Western interests would depend on its composition. The composition of the Conference would depend in its turn on (a) who received invitations and (b) who accepted them. We had no control over the issuing of invitations. It was possible that we could exert some influence over the acceptance of invitations.'¹⁸ The British diplomacy upheld this opinion even if the United States disagreed with it. The Foreign Office, namely, could not agree with the American view that even the slightest informal pressure would have harmful consequences and considered the American worries about the participation of Cuba and other Latin-American countries exaggerated.¹⁹ Therefore, the British diplomats did not comprehend the observation of US ambassador to Belgrade George F. Kennan (1961–1963) that western powers were interested not in the participation of the moderate countries but rather their total absence from the conference. Kennan saw this the only possibility to avoid their isolation at a summit where countries with radical views on foreign policy would presumably dominate.²⁰ Henceforward, the State Department did not wish to encourage other countries either to accept or refuse the invitation. Still, after a partial shift in American foreign policy in this matter in early August, it became possible that the British representatives, in accordance with their American, French and West German counterparts, inform the foreign ministries of those countries that had accepted the invitation on the British views concerning those topics that would probably emerge at the agenda of the conference.²¹

¹⁷ PRO FO 371/161216 WP 13/102., PRO FO 371/161218 WP 13/145, WP 13/146. and PRO FO 371/161219 WP 13/175.

¹⁸ PRO FO 371/161212 WP 13/39.

¹⁹ PRO FO 371/161214 WP 13/64 and WP 13/66.

²⁰ PRO FO 371/161214 WP 13/73.

²¹ FO 371/161215 WP 13/98. US president John F. Kennedy (1961–1963) briefly referred to the coming summit at his press conference on 31 August. According to British sources, he wanted to encourage the moderate states to take a constructive stance at the conference. PRO FO 371/161219 WP 13/177.

The first conference of the heads of state and government of the non-aligned countries opened in Belgrade on 1 September 1961. Twenty-five countries participated as full members and three other countries sent observers.²² The international situation was rather tense, which could be felt in the mood of the meetings, too. The Algerian War, which was in full swing (negotiations between the National Liberation Front (FNL) and the French government on the outcome of the war re-started in May 1961),²³ directly affected many African countries that had recently become independent; the disastrous landing attempt at the Bay of Bigs between 17–19 April 1961 failed to overthrow Fidel Castro's regime; the East German communist regime started to erect the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961 creating another possibility for direct confrontation between the superpowers; and, finally, shortly before the conference commenced, on 31 August 1961, the Soviet leadership unilaterally denounced the moratorium signed in October 1959 between the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union and declared its intention to resume nuclear testing.

The British embassy in Belgrade regularly reported on the details of the conference. Moreover, the British ambassador to Yugoslavia, Michael Justin Creswell (1960–1964) prepared three detailed and elaborated summaries after the summit had concluded. One was written about the proceedings of the conference itself, the other on the role Yugoslavia played at the conference and the third on the possible effects of the conference on neutralist states and the non-aligned movement.²⁴

In his full and detailed summary on the work of the conference, written on 12 September, Creswell emphasized that the Yugoslavs, as the host nation, carefully arranged the facilities and its surroundings for the conference. By leaps and bounds, roads were widened and received concrete surface, the proprietors were requested to repair and clean their dwellings, flowers were planted along the roads, to mention just a few improvements. Dedinje, a posh Belgrade neighbourhood, where most of the delegations were accommodated, got a new electric public lightning. Twenty-eight speeches were made at the opening section of the summit, lasting for three days. Among those delivered, Creswell 'without doubt' considered Nehru's moderate speech the most important both in his short telegrams sent after each speech and both in his summary. The Indian premier stressed that the most important task of the conference should be to give a positive response to the tensions in the world without preparing a concrete and detailed solution: 'Nehru [...] then followed with an eloquent plea that the dominant note of the conference should be to devote itself to taking some positive action to meet the present danger of war, to which every other

²² Apart from the participants of the preliminary conference in Cairo, eight other heads of state or government were invited. Among them Nigeria, Upper Volta (today Burkina Faso), Togo and Mexico declined to participate, while Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil sent observers to Belgrade. The only state that expected and therefore accepted the invitation was Lebanon. Later Cyprus and Tunisia were also invited. The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo received an invitation while the conference had already been in progress. PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/287.

²³ It is worth mentioning that Yugoslavia, Ghana, Cambodia and Afghanistan used the conference to announce the *de jure* recognition of the Temporary Government of the Republic of Algeria led by Benn Hedda. It was further affirmed by the 3rd point of the joint communiqué. J. NAGY LÁSZLÓ: *Az algériai háború 1954–1962 [The Algerian War, 1954–1962]*. Szeged, Universitas Szeged Kiadó, 2010. 268.

²⁴ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/286., WP 13/287. and WP 13/298.

question must be considered secondary. It seemed that in some quarters the real meaning of nuclear warfare was not fully grasped, the world continued to re-arm. There was no choice left but that between negotiation and war, and the conference should use its full influence to ensure that the Great Powers should not be too rigid to negotiate. [...] the conference should not make detailed proposals or propose detailed solutions for the matters in dispute, as this might only hinder the process of negotiation.' The Indian statesman expressed his opinion on the Berlin question in a similarly restrained way. He thought that only two options were possible: '(a) the existence of two Germanies and (b) the need of access for Berlin.' According to him, the only real and lasting solution would be complete disarmament but he did not consider it possible at the given circumstances.²⁵ Therefore, he regarded the real task of the conference to urge the American and the Soviet leadership to continue their negotiations. Besides Nehru, British ambassador Michael Creswell regarded U Nu's 'thoughtful and philosophical speech'²⁶ only worthy of a statesman even if he considered Nasser's speech 'surprisingly moderate' and emphasized that it dealt with a wide array of things and the need to reduce tensions in the world.²⁷

Unlike the above mentioned speeches, not only the British ambassador but the British diplomats in London, too, were disappointed at Tito's second speech, which was delivered on 3 September. In his speech, the Yugoslav president supported Khrushchev's suggestions considering the recognition of East Germany, the Odera–Neisse rivers as border between Germany and Poland, and the German peace treaty, and strongly criticized the re-armament of West Germany. Moreover, he did not condemn the Soviet Union for announcing its intention to resume nuclear testing. Although he did find the coincidence unfortunate, Tito thought it totally understandable as the French were carrying out similar tests in the Sahara. Creswell was particularly surprised by the restrained Yugoslav reaction because the spokesman of the Yugoslav ministry of foreign affairs referred to the Soviet move as 'brutal' in his first response to the announcement.²⁸ The Yugoslavs could not hide the fact from the British diplomats, either, that during the reception of the guests at Batajnica airport on 31 August Soviet ambassador to Belgrade Aleksei Episev met Tito on Soviet request. Moreover, diplomatic circles at the Yugoslav capital whispered about a second meeting between Tito and the Soviet ambassador that might have taken place either on 1 or 2 September.²⁹ In all likelihood, diplomats from other countries were also curious as several theories circulated, from which Creswell pointed out the commentary of the Croat prime minister Vladimir Bakarić as a possible explanation. According to Bakarić, Tito wanted to back Khrushchev against hard liners in Soviet military leadership. But the British diplomat did not give credit to this rumour.³⁰

Conversely, it was obvious for both the British and the Yugoslav diplomats that Tito went too far in his speech. The fact that the Yugoslav chargé d'affaires to London Duhaček was compelled to enter into explanations also confirms this. During lunch with senior

²⁵ PRO FO 371/161220 WP13/186.

²⁶ PRO FO 371/161220 WP13/185.

²⁷ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/287.

²⁸ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/286.

²⁹ Some diplomats thought that the Soviet ambassador might conveyed Khrushchev's personal message to Tito. PRO FO 371/161226 WP13/286.

³⁰ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/286.

British diplomat Crispin Tickell, he did not miss the opportunity to mention that Tito 'had been shocked as anyone else at the Russian decision', but 'felt it necessary to strike some sort of balance between East and West'. So that was the real reason behind his criticism of the French nuclear tests. In order to support his argument, Duhaček underlined that Tito, while strongly criticized the colonial powers, 'had specifically excluded the United Kingdom, whose record he admired and whose responsibility towards the people formerly or still under their charge he well understood'. Moreover, Yugoslavia welcomed the British-American joint proposal of 3 September on the prohibition of nuclear tests in the atmosphere, though, 'he thought it highly unlikely that the Russians would accept it'. Still, the Yugoslav diplomat was unable to dispel the British fears. Therefore, the Foreign Office put all their trust in Nehru and hoped that the Indian statesman had enough influence and the moderates would prevail.³¹

The fears of the Foreign Office were not without foundation. During the closed sessions that started on 3 September, the delegations made a rather slow progress in formulating the joint communiqué and the harmonization of different standpoints was accompanied by numerous heated debates. The British diplomats could gather only little reliable information about the proceedings of the closed sessions as British ambassador Michael Creswell admitted it in his urgent and confident cypher telegram to the Foreign Office on 4 September. According to the telegram, the ambassador learnt from confident sources that the committee, whose task was to draft the joint communiqué, was divided into two sub-committees. One of them, which was led by Ghana, dealt with the main elements of the actual crisis (Berlin, nuclear tests, disarmament), while the other sub-committee discussed the long term problems (structural changes in the UN, colonization). Members of the conference dissented on the best way to present the resolutions of the conference to Khrushchew and US President John F. Kennedy. Nehru, who was about to leave for Moscow, was rather reluctant in accepting the request and nobody was willing to deliver it to Washington at all. According to Creswell, at last the delegations decided to convey the message through regular diplomatic channels.³² An open sign of misunderstandings was connected to Tunesian president Habib Bourguiba (1957–1987) who did not turn up at the closing session on 6 September and left the conference without fore-warning. At the airport, the secretary of the Tunesian embassy had an open row with Tito and then Bourguiba let his passion run away with him and used improper words after the captain of his plane forwarded Tito's farewell message, as it was required by protocol.³³

With regard to the success of the conference, Creswell himself was in doubts, as it is clearly reflected in his above mentioned telegram of 4 September, and questioned whether the conference would finish its agenda by 5 September as it was originally planned. Nehru's insistence to leave for Moscow as scheduled added further to his worries because it was the Indian senior diplomat Ratan Kumar Nehru who was to lead the Indian delegation in Nehru's absence and he continued to be rather pessimistic considering the outcome of the conference.³⁴

³¹ PRO FO 371/161221 WP 13/212. The official English version of the final communiqué does not contain Tito's post-entry on Soviet nuclear tests. PRO FO 371/161228 WP 13/345.

³² PRO FO 371/161221 WP 13/210.

³³ PRO FO 371/161224 WP 13/250G.

³⁴ PRO FO 371/161221 WP 13/210.



Regardless of these events, the British diplomats both in Belgrade and in London considered the final declaration and the short statement entitled *Danger of War and Appeal for Peace* of 6 September³⁵ a victory for the moderate participants. They were delighted that the delegates behaved more sensibly than they had previously expected it. The Soviet Union failed to put pressure on the conference by resuming its nuclear tests and the participants stoutly rejected the Soviet plans for establishing a third bloc.³⁶ I must mention here that Creswell and another British diplomat at the Belgrade embassy, Dennis D. Brown in particular drew the attention of the Foreign Office to a question of terminology: while western readers referred to the notion *bloc* as a political grouping, the participants at the conference used it in a military sense: 'The point is that to a Western reader (and perhaps to an Eastern reader as well) the term "bloc" [underlined in the original, V. P.] implies a political grouping. The non-aligned countries clearly aspire to form a distinct political group of their own, but say that they "do not wish to form a bloc [underlined in the original, V. P.] and cannot be a bloc [underlined in the original, V. P.]" [...] Thus there is at first sight an inconsistency. However, for the countries represented at Belgrade, the blocs [underlined in the original, V. P.], whether Eastern or Western, are not primarily political but military groupings.'³⁷

Despite the positive outcome of the final communiqué, Creswell referred to it in his summary as such a document that 'conspicuously lacks the virtues of clarity and conciseness while enshrining a number of interesting ideas'. Generally speaking, he still did not consider it dangerous to western interests.³⁸

In the other two summaries, Creswell examined what possible effect the Belgrade summit had on neutrality in general and on Yugoslav foreign policy in particular. He reckoned that a wide range of views were presented at the conference and there was 'no common ideology [that] can be claimed to unite them'. He thought it entirely reasonable as 'they represented every form of society and institutions from the medieval monarchies of Yemen and Ethiopia to the modern revisionist Marxism of Communist Yugoslavia'. The countries were different from one other in population, wealth and importance. Moreover, 'save from the Arabs, no ties of joint defence linked any of the participants'. The only common feature was their anti-colonial stance and that 'they were all, in greater or less degree, in need of rapid economic development'. Although the extravagance that accompanied the conference (illuminated public spaces, repainted façades just like Potiemkin villages) had surely impressed the local public opinion, Creswell considered Tito's performance as an obvious failure, even if he supposed that the Yugoslav statesman strengthened the moderate delegates at the closed sessions. He outlined that 'Tito has seriously marred the image which he had previously sought to create by speaking as he did'. According to the British ambassador, western press gave a critical reception to Tito's speech and only a few of his ideas were incorporated in the final version of the

³⁵ For excerpts from the Belgrade Declaration see: Summit Declarations of Non-Aligned Movement (1961–2009). Kathmandu, Institute of Foreign Affairs, 2011. 1–6. Available: <http://www.ifa.org.np/pdf/Declaration%20of%20nam.pdf>. Retrieved on 19 January 2012.

³⁶ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/287.

³⁷ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/298 és WP 13/299.

³⁸ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/287.

communiqué. He correctly supposed the deterioration of US–Yugoslav relations, too.³⁹ He had to admit that 'the closest working relationship has been established between Presidents Tito and Nasser', but regardless of the obvious signs of misunderstanding between the moderates and the radicals, the Yugoslavs managed to preserve their good relations with both groups. Moreover, secret meetings might have also taken place during the breaks of the conference, as Creswell referred to it in his summary. The fact that Tito's personal staff was the most active on the night from 6 to 7 September might have been a clear sign of it as Creswell indicated. He guessed that Tito's meeting with Nehru and Sukarno might have taken place then.⁴⁰

With regard to the impact of the conference on Great Britain and British foreign policy, Creswell's analysis shows a rather ambiguous picture. The British ambassador outlined that one should not take the outcome of the conference 'permanent and definite'. Although he did not suppose that the underlining ideological principles of the non-aligned movement would significantly change in the near future, Creswell took it for granted that their application 'to specific cases seems likely to vary considerably according to circumstances'. (From a western point of view he considered this the most dangerous scenario.) Presumably, they could count on some sympathy in colonial matters (he too considered the lack of open criticism of British colonial policy worthy of attention), while the participants 'would like to compose Great-Power differences. They see themselves not as judges, but as conciliators. As such they must perforce aim at conciliation on some mean between the two extremes.' Despite their effort to be objective, it can easily happen that they accidentally became 'co-belligerent on the Communist side'. This, so goes Creswell's argument, the British must accept as a fact: 'We may not like these activities but they, and their authors, are a fact of life which we cannot disregard, and which we shall have to live'. The main task of British diplomacy, according to the ambassador, was to explore the given possibilities. They had to establish working relations with as many non-aligned countries as possible. (Paradoxically, he considered the British imperial history as an advantage there.) In order to achieve these aims, patience was highly needed: 'In the main, however, we shall have to rely upon much patience, and on the recognition that neutralist views, though frequently inconvenient to ourselves, and often coloured by selfish interests are, in the majority of cases, sincerely held.'⁴¹

In London, the Foreign Office reached similar conclusions as it can be deduced from the confident telegram sent by Crispin Tickell to the British delegation at the NATO headquarters in Paris on 25 September 1961. In this telegram, Tickell gave instructions to the British delegation for the next meeting of the Political Committee on the following day

³⁹ After the conference had ended, the United States communicated its disapproval to Yugoslavia in a sharp note. The Yugoslavs rejected the American argument in a similarly sharp note and disclaimed the American's right to interfere with their domestic affairs. PRO FO 371/161226 WP13/286. One must also note that the stance of the American diplomacy was not uniform. US ambassador George F. Kennan, who remained highly critical of the Yugoslav foreign policy, privately informed the British ambassador to Belgrade on 1 November that the State Department was divided. According to the American diplomat, the department dealing with Eastern Europe was optimistic without reason. PRO FO 371/161228 WP13/328.

⁴⁰ PRO FO 371/161226 WP 13/298.

⁴¹ PRO FO 371/161226 WP13/298.

and emphasized that the heads of state and government present at the Belgrade summit (or at least those whose countries became independent much earlier) behaved more sensible than previously expected. Whatever they said in front of the public, they objected the resume of Soviet nuclear testing and opposed the Soviet plans for reorganizing the UN. Tickell expressed his appreciation for Nehru's positive role. He thought that Britain should be grateful to him for the 'relative mild' wording of the peace declaration and the 'relatively harmless' character of the declaration.⁴²

Still, I must argue based on the papers of the Foreign Office that Britain, too, was offended by Tito's speech, even if to a somewhat milder degree than the United States. The confident note on the talks Lord Privy Seal Edward Heath (1960–1963), later prime minister (1970–1974), had with Tito on 15 November 1961 during Heath's visit in Yugoslavia confirms this. Namely, the Foreign Office disapproved of the Yugoslav apologies about Tito's speech and criticized the Yugoslav method of adopting a certain 'double standards to the actions of East and West'.⁴³

Neither the British, nor the American resentment could crush the non-aligned movement. Tito visited Cairo as early as 18–19 November 1961 to hold talks with Nasser and Nehru, who was on his way home to India from Washington.⁴⁴ The first Yugoslav foreign minister, Koča Popović visited several Latin-American countries in May 1962 and prepared the way for Tito's one month tour in September 1963.⁴⁵ Finally, the next conference of the non-aligned states took place between 5–10 October 1964 in Cairo, which has been followed by 14 other conferences so far. The latest was held again in Belgrade between 5–6 September 2011 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the movement.

⁴² PRO FO 371/161227 WP 13/303. In the end, the Political Committee of NATO discussed the Belgrade summit during its meeting on 5 October. At the meeting Tomlinson closely followed Tickell's instructions. The French and the Italian delegate expressed similar views, but the Italian ambassador mentioned that the participants would surely be more confident after the conference and would think that they could influence the two blocs in some ways or other. PRO FO 371/161227 WP 13/309.

⁴³ PRO FO 371/161228 WP 13/330. With the expression of „double standard” the Foreign Office referred to the speech of British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sir Douglas-Home at the House of Lords on 17 October, in which he mentioned the following in reference to the Belgrade summit: '[The participants of the conference] know perfectly well, particularly the Afro-Asian countries, that we have given independence to 600 million peoples in the last few years, and that that process continues rapidly. Yet resolution after resolution is framed and passed condemning the United Kingdom as colonialist, and there is never a protest against the Russian conduct of their own empire, which consists of one occupied country after another.' The Foreign Secretary also referred to Tito speech on 3 September: I heard one speech from the representative of a country to whom we have given a great deal of assistance saying that the technical aid agreements could be as bad as the old colonialism.' Hansard, House of Lord Reports, 17 October 1961. 336. hasáb. Forrás: <http://hansard.millbanksystem.com/lords/1961/oct/17/foreign-affairs>, retrived: 27 November 2011.

⁴⁴ PRO FO 371/161228 WP 13/336.

⁴⁵ RUBINSTEIN: i. m. 99–101.