

***The Balkan Pact, 1953–58.***  
***An analysis of Yugoslav–Greek–Turkish Relations based on***  
***British Archival Sources\****

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Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation in Ankara on 28 February 1953. The treaty, known as the Balkan Pact, served as the basis of a treaty of alliance, political cooperation and mutual assistance that the leaders of the three states signed one and a half years later, on 9 August 1954 at the popular Yugoslav weekend resort Bled (now in Slovenia).<sup>1</sup> Although the cooperation between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey originated in the classic period of the Cold War, it only took manifest form in the said treaty after Stalin's death (announced on 5 March 1953) and in the atmosphere of the period of early normalization under the new Soviet party secretary Nikita Khrushchev. It was first and foremost Yugoslavia that aimed to promote an increased cooperation because it had become completely isolated after the escalation of the Soviet–Yugoslav conflict. The economic blockade, the ongoing propaganda warfare, the numerous daily border incidents and the fear from a Soviet and/or satellite military action raised serious concern in the Yugoslav leaders and induced them to normalize their relationship with western powers in order to preserve their own leadership. The United States, Britain and France were also interested in “keeping Tito afloat” and provided significant economic and military aid to the country in the form of aid, credit and loan.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, discussions started in 1952 about the incorporation of Yugoslavia in the system of western military alliances. As Yugoslavia did

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<sup>1</sup> The British archival sources I managed to consult refer to the cooperation between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey as the *Balkan bloc* prior to the Ankara agreement, and as the *Balkan Pact* between 1953–1954. Most of the document use the expression *Balkan Alliance* when they refer to the Bled agreement, and both *pact* and *alliance* after 1954.

<sup>2</sup> For the Western help see: Heuser, Beatrice: *Western Containment Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948–1953*. London – New York, Routledge, 1989.; Lane, Ann: *Britian, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity, 1941–1949*. Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 1989.; Larson, David L.: *United States Foreign Policy towards Yugoslavia, 1943–1963*. Washington, University of America Press, 1979.; Lees, Lorraine M.: *Keeping Tito Afloat. The United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War*. University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997. In Hungarian: Vukman Péter: *Moszkvától Londonig. Nagy-Britannia és Jugoszlávia a szovjet–jugoszláv konfliktus idején (1948–1953)*. [From Moscow to London. Britain and Yugoslavia during the Soviet–Yugoslav Conflict (1948–1953)]. Szeged, SZTE Történettudományi Doktori Iskola, 2011.

not wish to become a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the significance of the Yugoslav–Greek and the Yugoslav–Turkish relations improved after Greece and Turkey had become full members of the organization. In this paper, I will trace the events preceding and leading up to the Balkan Pact, its operation in practice, the many difficulties it faced on the operational level, and the reasons of its failure. I will put special emphasis on the British perception of how the alliance was formed and operated. I will base my argumentation on documents of the Foreign Office which I consulted during my research at the National Archives – Public Records Office in London.

It is understandable that the British foreign office planning showed great interest in the creation of a regional alliance in the Balkans, as it would have provided an opportunity to link Yugoslavia to the NATO through Greece and Turkey without offering membership to the Yugoslavs. The idea of a possible pact first emerged in a telegram of British ambassador to Yugoslavia, Ivo Mallet, on 1 November 1951, in which he reported on Tito's press conference where the Yugoslav marshal referred to the Greek rapprochement. Although Tito stated that "Yugoslavia was not yet considering the formation of a regional pact with Greece and Turkey, or indeed any other pact", he admitted that "the threat to Yugoslavia was also a threat to Greece. Yugoslavia would modify her attitude and adapt her relations with these countries according to how the situation developed."<sup>3</sup> Half a year later, on 20 August 1952, Tito emphasized in an interview with Turkish journalists that "Greece too was threatened with aggression and was a neighbour of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia must therefore co-operate with her: steps to this end has already been taken". Although he kept repeating the well-known Yugoslav rhetoric against the existence of military pacts, Tito also acknowledged the importance of tripartite, Yugoslav–Greek–Turkish cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

J. C. Petrie, of the Foreign Office, wrote a detailed and grounded analysis on the regional cooperation and its effect on Yugoslav–NATO military planning on 15 January 1953. In this paper, he thought it necessary to incorporate Yugoslavia into western military planning more closely and considered five possibilities: (1) Yugoslavia's full NATO membership; (2) a Yugoslav–Greek–Turkish tripartite cooperation in the Balkans extended by a guarantee from NATO; (3) a Yugoslav–Greek–Turkish tripartite cooperation extended by a bilateral American–British or a trilateral (American, British and French) guarantee; (4) the establishment of an "Eastern NATO" involving the Balkans and the Middle East; and (5) keeping the status quo. After considering the advantages and disadvantages of each possibility from a British point of view and with regard to the military and security aspects in general, Petrie considered Yugoslavia's full NATO membership the most plausible ("the easiest") scenario. From a military point of view, because Yugoslavia would add 30 additional divisions to the alliance, which would have improved NATO's strength in defending Italy and Thrace against a Soviet attack. From the perspective of security in general, the membership would not only strengthen the Yugoslav morale but it would also make it certain that Yugoslavia would take the side of the West in a general war. Moreover, Yugoslavia's membership would remit the offensive steps of the Soviet satellites, and

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<sup>3</sup> The National Archives – Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, London. Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906–1966. PRO FO 371/95469 RY1022/19.

<sup>4</sup> PRO FO 371/102176 WY10344/4.

would make it easier to handle the hostility between Yugoslavia and Albania. On the other hand, he was completely aware of the fact that the Soviet Union would certainly regard Yugoslavia's membership as a direct provocation and all members of the alliance would be involved in a war if Yugoslavia was attacked. He also feared that many NATO states and the Western general public would certainly oppose its membership.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, Petrie considered a limited association of the Balkan states more feasible, which would be extended by a collective NATO guarantee or a guarantee from Britain, the United States and France: "A N.A.T.O. Guarantee to a Balkan bloc including Yugoslavia would have virtually the same deterrent effect as a guarantee within N.A.T.O. It would have the same advantages from the point of view of joint planning as N.A.T.O. Membership. It would, however, avoid all the most difficult political objections – especially the Italian question and public opinion in Western Europe (which has, after all, already faced the admission of Germany to the E.D.C.). On balance, therefore, the solution advocated here would seem to offer the most advantages combined with the least disadvantages." Petrie was certain that the guarantee of the alliance would itself force the Yugoslavs to cooperate more closely and sign a defence pact as soon as possible. Therefore, he suggested that the British diplomacy concentrate on the realization of one of the two scenarios mentioned above, even if they could only provide the Yugoslavs with a tripartite guarantee: "In practice, since it is these countries who will bear the brunt of the decision to defend Yugoslavia, this would not make very much difference. From the military point of view it should be equally acceptable to the Yugoslavs, Greeks and Turks", although it would lack NATO's moral or psychological additional strength.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, the military planning between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey also became more intensive.<sup>7</sup> An official Yugoslav military delegation visited Athens in September 1952. From the Greek capital, the delegation travelled to Ankara, where they were given an especially warm welcome. They were received not only by the Turkish foreign and defence ministers but also by the prime minister and the president. Moreover, they were allowed to visit a military base in vicinity of the capital.<sup>8</sup> Reciprocating the visit

<sup>5</sup> PRO FO 371/107843 WY1076/31. Tito made it unambiguously evident many times that he did not want to join NATO. According to Svetozar Rajak, it had three reasons: (1) Tito could remain neutral during an east-west military conflict at other parts of the world; (2) he could forestall the Soviet propaganda, and most importantly (3) Tito feared that the ideological character of NATO would destabilize the communist nature of his Yugoslav regime. Rajak, Svetozar: *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War. Reconciliation, comradeship, confrontation, 1953–1957*. London – New York, Routledge, 2011. 35.

<sup>6</sup> PRO FO 371/107843 WY1076/31.

<sup>7</sup> For the Yugoslav–Greek relations after World War Two and during the Greek Civil War see: Barker, Elisabeth: *The Yugoslavs and the Greek Civil War of 1946–1949*. In: Lars Baerentzen – John O. Iatrides – Ole L. Smith, eds.: *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War 1945–1949*. Copenhagen, Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987. 297–308. and Pappas, Nicholas: *The Soviet–Yugoslav Conflict and the Greek Civil War*. In: Wayne S. Vucinich, ed.: *At The Brink of War and Peace: The Tito–Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1982. 219–237. For the American and British role in early Yugoslav–Greek rapprochement see: Stefanidis, Ioannis: *United States, Great Britain and the Greek–Yugoslav Rapprochement, 1949–1950. Balkan Studies*, 1986/2. 315–343.

<sup>8</sup> PRO FO 371/102191 WY1076/19.

of the Yugoslav delegation, a Greek and a Turkish military delegation visited Belgrade in November. For the big surprise of the Greek delegation, the Yugoslavs proposed to immediately start discussions on direct military planning at the first session of the Yugoslav–Greek meetings. According to British sources, the Greek delegation got the necessary approval from Athens.<sup>9</sup> During 19–25 January 1953, Turkish minister of foreign affairs Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (1950–1955) visited the Yugoslavs, and Greek foreign minister Stephanos Stephanopolous (1952–1955) was also due to visit the Yugoslav capital. As a result of the meetings, a treaty of friendship between Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey was signed in Ankara on 28 February 1953. The policy of rapprochement was crowned by a treaty of alliance, political cooperation and mutual assistance (known as the Balkan Alliance) signed in Bled on 9 August 1954.<sup>10</sup>

The Yugoslav suggestion for concrete military planning in November 1952 was the result of the failure of the discussions with Thomas Troy Handy, deputy commander-in-chief of the US forces in Europe. Troy visited the Yugoslav capital between 15–20 November 1952, shortly before the Greek visit, as head of a tripartite (American, British and French) delegation in order to coordinate western and Yugoslav military planning. The differences in the aims of the two sides and the Yugoslav suspicions resulted in the failure of the discussions; furthermore, Handy lacked authorization to give a concrete guarantee to provide direct military assistance to Yugoslavia if the country was attacked by the Soviet Union. Therefore, Greece and Turkey became strategically more important in the eyes of the Yugoslav leaders. Svetozar Rajak, historian at London School of Economics, also supports the above argumentation. Based on Yugoslav archival records, he emphasizes that the failure of the Handy mission and the American presidential campaign (principally because of its anti-Communist rhetoric) had resulted in a national security crisis in Yugoslavia by late autumn of 1952. Tito was aware of the fact that only a western guarantee would divert Stalin from attacking Yugoslavia. Therefore, he made it clear during the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party on 27 November that they must enter into negotiations with Greece and Turkey.<sup>11</sup>

The British diplomats also recognized the connection between the failure of the Handy mission and the signing of the treaty of friendship in Ankara. The British ambassador in Ankara, Alexander Knox Helm (1951–1953) mentioned in a letter on 27 February 1953 that, at least in his opinion, the failure of Handy's visit to Belgrade stimulated the consolidation of the treaty, as Tito had realized that "he was not going to get what he was wanting without giving something", while "perhaps Tito thought he could achieve his purpose more easily by playing on the Turks and Greeks".<sup>12</sup> All in all, the Foreign Office was certainly delighted that it managed to include the British point of view in the final version of the treaty. Even if the Yugoslavs did not want to incorporate any direct reference to NATO in the text, its final version referred to the Greek and Turkish positions within the

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<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 371/102191 WY1076/24.

<sup>10</sup> The Yugoslav sources on the Pact is already published. For further reference see: *Balkanski pakt. Zbornik dokumenata*. Beograd, Vojnoistorijski institut, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Rajak: *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*. op. cit. 34.

<sup>12</sup> PRO FO 371/107844 WY1076/77.

alliance, and the contracting parties emphasized that the treaty was open to other countries.<sup>13</sup>

Possibly the most thorough British analysis on the significance of the treaty was written at the chancery of the Belgrade embassy on 20 February 1954, shortly before the first anniversary of the tripartite pact. Reflecting on the appreciatory article the Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs, Koča Popović (1953–1965), wrote on the anniversary, the chancery stated that the article “was designed partly to make up words for some of the substance which is lacking in the Pact”.<sup>14</sup> Tito and the Yugoslav leaders did not succeed to achieve their most important goal, namely, a guarantee of direct western military assistance in the time of war; moreover, the Yugoslav–western relations started to deteriorate as the Trieste question remained unsettled. The process of normalizations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union that started after Stalin’s death remained slow-paced, while the Yugoslav–Asian and Yugoslav–Latin American relations had not bore their fruit yet.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, according to the British argumentation, this treaty embodied “one solid achievement in the field of international relations”.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the archival sources I managed to consult, the Foreign Office was first informed about the expansion of the Ankara treaty into a treaty of alliance from the *en clair* telegram of the Ankara embassy on 16 April 1954 at latest.<sup>17</sup> The announcement of the Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs at a press conference in Ankara must have taken the embassy by surprise, as ambassador James Bowker (1954–1958) admitted that he had not expected that such important discussions would take place during Tito’s official visit (12–18 April) and the press statement of Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs Koča Popović on 15 April “came as a considerable surprise”. Bowker supposed that the political discussions took place upon Tito’s request,<sup>18</sup> but remained unable to figure out Tito’s motives. He deduced from the articles of the Turkish press that the Yugoslavs had wanted to put extra pressure on the Americans, but he gathered from a discussion with deputy minister of Turkish foreign affairs Nuri Birgi that the Turkish leadership thought that “Tito has been left in no doubt about his anxiety to cooperate fully with the West against the Soviet threat”. As a private opinion, Bowker also thought it possible that the Yugoslavs simply wanted to break out from their isolation, which they still considered significant.<sup>19</sup> Similarly to Birgi’s argumentation, the British ambassador in Belgrade, Ivo Mallet, also thought that “it was regarded by the Yugoslav Government as the best way in which they could

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<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 371/107843 WY1076/64.

<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 371/113166 WY1071/6.

<sup>15</sup> For the origins of Yugoslavia’s policy of non alignment see: Rubinstein, Alvin Z.: *Yugoslavia and the Non-aligned World*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970. and more recently: Rajak, Svetozar: In Search of a Life outside the Two Blocks: Yugoslavia’s Road to Non-Alignment. In: Ljuograd Dimić: *Great Powers and Small Countries in Cold War 1945–1955 – issue of ex-Yugoslavia. Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, Belgrade, November 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup>, 2003*. Belgrade, 2005. 84–105.

<sup>16</sup> PRO FO 371/113166 WY1071/6.

<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 371/113163 WY10344/11.

<sup>18</sup> PRO FO 371/113163 WY10344/16.

<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 371/113163 WY10344/20.

associate more closely with Western Defence”,<sup>20</sup> but agreed with his colleague in Ankara that the initiative must have come from the Yugoslav president.

Shortly after the announcement, Tito travelled to the Greek capital (2–6 June 1954). His visit was important as no previous consultation with the Greek government preceded the Yugoslav announcement in the Turkish capital. The British diplomacy also kept an eye on the military discussions of the three Balkan states, as Greece and Turkey were full members of the North Atlantic alliance, therefore, a future attack on Yugoslavia (as a result of the article on collective defence) could drag other NATO members into war and a local armed conflict would easily escalate into another world war.

This British interest is visible in N. J. A. Cheetham’s note on 11 May 1954, in which the British diplomat observed that further cooperation between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey not only have “serious obstacles”, but it would subject NATO “as a whole to possibly embarrassing commitments to Yugoslavia, a non-member”. Cheetham also considered the Yugoslav economic difficulties, the illiberal Yugoslav domestic policy, the “passionate” defence of national independence, and most importantly, the Trieste question as obstacles to a Yugoslav–western defence cooperation. According to the British diplomat, “no Balkan Pact or Alliance is worth unless it has N.A.T.O. To back it up”, but the assent of NATO’s to further cooperation is highly unlikely precisely because of the Trieste question and the opposition of Italy, especially as the secret negotiations with the Italians on Trieste also reached a decisive phase. Although Cheetham acknowledged that the text of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization did not forbid its members to participate in other alliances (Britain itself remained an ally of Jordan, the United States had signed a treaty of alliance with Australia and New Zealand), he pointed out the fact that “clearly Greece and Turkey have an obligation [...] not only to keep their N.A.T.O. Allies closely informed about a proposed alliance with an outside party but also perhaps only to proceed with such an alliance if their N.A.T.O. Allies approve.” Therefore, he regarded the assent of NATO a prerequisite for the development of the Ankara pact into a formal alliance. It did not mean that Cheetham opposed its further expansion, as, “such an Alliance might in fact be the best method of getting Yugoslavia committed to N.A.T.O. Without being a member of it”, but he regarded its timing unfortunate. After the final Trieste settlement, the alliance “would probably be a very useful addition to the strength of the Free World”, but before that, “could only create trouble for N.A.T.O.”<sup>21</sup> The Foreign Office presented Cheetham’s observations as its official opinion to Turkey on 13 May, to Greece on 21 May, and to Yugoslavia on 26 May.<sup>22</sup>

The Yugoslav plans also made it clear to the British diplomats that it would be necessary to harmonize the American, British and French positions. The discussions took place in London between 11–24 June 1954. In its summary on the four meetings (also sent as a telegram to the British delegation to NATO in Paris), the Foreign Office emphasized that they agreed to contact informally the Greek and Turkish governments “in order to encourage them to keep us informed of developments and to concert with us both about the terms of the Alliance, in so far as they will affect N.A.T.O. And about the method and

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<sup>20</sup> PRO FO 371/113163 WY10344/17.

<sup>21</sup> PRO FO 371/113167 WY1071/27.

<sup>22</sup> PRO FO 371/113166 WY1071/15., FO 371/114167 WY1071/35. and FO 371/113167 WY1071/44.

timing of presentation to the North Atlantic Council.” The French also suggested that the representatives of the three governments would then meet the Greek and Turkish representatives either in London or in Paris.<sup>23</sup> Britain occupied a middle ground during the discussions and considered it the most important to fully explore the exact Greek and Turkish views. Still, they felt that it was too early to discuss military matters. The British diplomats were not keen on taking the question into the plenum of NATO because of a possible opposition of Italy, the Scandinavian and the Benelux states; instead, they emphasized that the “ground should be prepared for advance of any formal discussions in the Council itself” and a settlement on the Trieste question must be reached first.<sup>24</sup>

Although the British worries were well founded, none of the member states raised serious objections at the informal meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 29 July. After the Greek and Turkish ambassadors successfully argued for the importance of the extension of the Ankara treaty into a formal alliance, the Italian ambassador, Alessandrini underlined the special geographical position of his country and the only thing he asked from Greece and Turkey was not to commit themselves to guarantees exceeding those prescribed by the Article 5 of the NATO Treaty,<sup>25</sup> as “the necessary liaison between NATO and the Alliance would be difficult to establish until normal relations had been established between Italy and Yugoslavia”. The ambassador also assured the other members of the council about his goodwill.<sup>26</sup> Italy’s cooperative stand was certainly influenced by the guarantee Ivone Kirkpatrick gave the Italian ambassador to the United Kingdom on 26 June. During their discussions, Kirkpatrick promised that “if on July 29 things went well for Yugoslavia I would be prepared to consider seeing the Yugoslav ambassador and pressing him to come to a quick agreement on Trieste”.<sup>27</sup> Although the NATO Council supported the extension of the Balkan pact, it did not specify how and what kind of connections be established between the two alliances. This was also emphasized in their message to the Yugoslavs.

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<sup>23</sup> PRO FO 371/113222 WU1073/5G

<sup>24</sup> PRO FO 371/113122 WU1073/5G

<sup>25</sup> Article 5 states: The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security. Available: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm?](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm?), date of access: 17 January 2013.

<sup>26</sup> PRO FO 371/113223 WU1073/70.

<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 371/113223 WU1073/66. After the signing of the Bled agreement, the settlement of the Trieste question accelerated. Although the final treaty was signed at Cosimo in 1975, according to the memorandum of understanding signed in London in October 1954, the city of Trieste became part of Italy, while the neighbouring villages, with ethnic Slovene population, to Yugoslavia. According to Rajak, it was rather of the failure of the French ratification of the European Defence Community that influenced the events. After the French parliament voted down the ratification on 30 August 1954, the Balkan Pact and, together with it, Yugoslavia became more important in western defence. Rajak: *Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union*. op. cit. 84.

The message, worded by French ambassador Hervé Alphand (1952–1954) underlined that “the Council regarded harmony of action in the political sphere and the close coordination of military planning as the essential elements of cooperation”, but did not give any suggestions on how to establish connections.<sup>28</sup>

However, because of the different aims, interests, and old wounds, the Balkan alliance was not without internal frictions. The Greek and Turkish obligations towards NATO and their different sub-sequential stand-points put further pressure on the tripartite alliance. These differences could not remain hidden from the British diplomats, who were fully aware of the fact that even the mere wording of the Ankara pact was not a smooth process. That is, Greece and Turkey wanted to refer to the military aims of the alliance only in general terms while the Yugoslavs pressed for a more precise use of terms and wanted to include a special reference to Article 51 of the UN Charter<sup>29</sup> in the preamble of the treaty.<sup>30</sup> The divergences of opinion became more evident in July 1954, in the process of finalizing the text of the treaty and partly because the British diplomacy pressured Greece and Turkey to slow down the process until the Trieste question remained unsettled. Although the Greek ambassador to London made it clear on 21 May 1954 that the “Greek Government themselves did not intend to apply any brakes to Tito”,<sup>31</sup> the British diplomacy was more successful in the case of Turkey, as the Turkish foreign ministry suggested its Balkan partners in the middle of July to postpone the planned meeting of the three foreign ministers, for which, they partly used the diplomatic excuse of the illness of the Turkish head of state. However, some of the relevant British documents indicate that the Turkish efforts could be linked to Italy, more precisely, to the Turkish efforts to incorporate Italy in the Balkan alliance as a founding member.<sup>32</sup>

The British diplomats also recognized that the old distrust and mutual prejudices between Greece and Turkey survived. The Turkish deputy minister of foreign affairs, Nuri Birgi, voiced similar opinions when he met David Scott Fox on 29 July 1954. He particularly objected to the Greek accusations that Turkey had intended to postpone the signing of the treaty, while, according to the Turkish stand, the three delegations did not agree on the precise date of the signing during their meeting in Athens, therefore, it made no sense to talk about postponement. The following short quotation clearly illustrates his real view of the Greek: “It was, he said, a typical example of the tendency of Greek

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<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 371/13223 WU1073/71.

<sup>29</sup> Article 51 of the Charter states: “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.” Available: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>, date of access: 17 January 2013.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/107843 WY1076/64.

<sup>31</sup> PRO FO 371/113167 WY1071/35.

<sup>32</sup> PRO FO 371/113222 WU1073/28G. and WU1073/34G.; PRO FO 371/113223 WU1073/73. and WU1073/89.

politicians to allow their tongues and their all-too fertile imaginations to run away with them, ‘as they had always been prone to do, ever since the days of Pericles’.”<sup>33</sup>

The differences within the Balkan Pact also became more pronounced due to the Cyprus question. Although informally, this problem already surfaced during the Bled meeting of the three foreign ministers back in August 1954,<sup>34</sup> and after Greece intended to include the question in the agenda of the next regular session of the UN Assembly in December. Turkey and Britain strongly opposed this move. Britain was directly involved in the Cyprus question. Britain took over the *de facto* administration of the island from the Ottoman Empire in 1878 and annexed it *de jure* after Turkey entered world war one as an ally of the central powers.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Yugoslavia was forced to take a stand on the issue, and the British diplomacy also tried to pressure the Yugoslav leaders to at least abstain from voting.<sup>36</sup> The Yugoslav diplomacy finally worked out a compromise, about the details of which Aleš Bebler informed British ambassador Frank Roberts (1954–1957) on 11 December: “While it had been a mistake on the part of Greece to bring the question before the United Nations, thus endangering good relations and security in South East Europe, Yugoslavia could not oppose discussions in the United Nations because of her own consistent view [...] that all disputes could be brought before the United Nations. On the other hand, Yugoslavia intended to remain neutral on the substance of the question as between her friends and allies, as the latter has remained neutral during the Trieste dispute.” Although Frank Roberts was unable to gather more information from the Yugoslav diplomats,<sup>37</sup> British diplomacy certainly achieved its minimal aim. To the relief of Britain, the official Yugoslav standpoint remained the same in 1955. The Yugoslav minister of foreign affairs, Koča Popović, “expressed the strong hope that the question would not come up again in the United Nations this year”<sup>38</sup> during his discussions with Frank Roberts on 15 July 1955. Unfortunately to the British, the Yugoslav stance sharply modified by next autumn: Tito then already urged to include the question in the agenda of the UN.<sup>39</sup> This step certainly strengthened Yugoslav–Greek cooperation, and consequently, also caused troubles in Yugoslav–Turkish relations and the Balkan pact.

However, there were also other factors that made the everyday operation of the alliance more difficult. The Yugoslav–Egyptian rapprochement, the negative Yugoslav remarks on

<sup>33</sup> PRO FO 371/113223 WU1073/73.

<sup>34</sup> PRO FO 371/113223 WU1073/84.

<sup>35</sup> Jelavich, Barbara: *A Balkán története*. II. kötet [History of the Balkans. Vol. II.]. Budapest, Osiris, 2000., 1996. 360.

<sup>36</sup> For example, during the discussions between British ambassador Ivo Mallet and Edvard Kardelj on 9 September and expressed by the newly appointed British ambassador to Yugoslavia Frank Roberts on 11 December. PRO FO 371/112860 WG1081/502., PRO FO 371/112878. WG1081/1097. and PRO FO 371/112880 WG1081/1146.

<sup>37</sup> PRO FO 371/112880 WG1081/1146.

<sup>38</sup> PRO FO 371/117644 RG1081/685. Three days earlier, the head of the Anglo–American department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kos, elaborated on the Yugoslav position and stated that although it was against the traditional Yugoslav policy to support putting the question on the agenda, the ongoing negotiation between the interested parties, as it had been recommended by the UN the previous years, served as a pretext for the Yugoslavs. PRO FO 371/117645 RG1081/705.

<sup>39</sup> PRO FO 371/123928 RG1081/2133.

the Baghdad pact<sup>40</sup> and the first steps in the Yugoslav policy of non-alignment caused troubles in Yugoslav–Turkish relations,<sup>41</sup> and the mutual prejudices between Greece and Turkey also remained unchanged. More importantly, as the possibility of a military attack against Yugoslavia decreased with the slow but gradual normalization of relations between the country and the Soviet Union, Tito was less and less interested in the alliance. Yugoslavia's leading role in the non-alignment movement provided a new and more important international stage for the Yugoslav statesman. However, this did not mean that the Yugoslav–Greek relations had deteriorated. The existence of numerous visits between the leaders, politicians and diplomats of the two countries supports this. It is true, though, that these visits often meant no more than mutual diplomatic politeness.

In connection with Tito's visit to Corfu in late July – early August 1956, the Foreign Office observed that "Tito would not welcome any revival of the military aspects of the Balkan Pact, still less any bilateral military agreement with Greece."<sup>42</sup> Although the Yugoslavs regularly assured the British diplomats that they did not intend to denounce the treaty,<sup>43</sup> the British ambassador in Belgrade, Frank Roberts, remarked that he would not be surprised by a closer political, economic and military cooperation between Greece and Yugoslavia, as he indicated in his report on the visit of Greek prime minister Konstantin Karamanlis in Yugoslavia between 4–7 December 1956.<sup>44</sup> Although in early 1957 both Yugoslav deputy minister of foreign affairs, Iveković and head of department Zemljak assured the British repeatedly of their commitment toward the Balkan Pact (while British diplomats in Belgrade saw the intensifying deterioration of Soviet–Yugoslav relation as the principal motive),<sup>45</sup> the Yugoslav interest remained temporary. During his visit to Athens (4–7 April 1957) the member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the League of Yugoslav Communists, Svetozar Vukmanović, made it clear in a press interview that although the alliance "was in the interest of all three countries but was at present dormant".<sup>46</sup> Two years later, during Tito's visit to Rhodes (2–6 March 1959), the British ambassador to Greece, Roger Allen, obtained a confidential information from the Greek minister of foreign affairs that "Tito obviously attached great importance to his neutral position between the Eastern and Western blocks and was therefore not anxious at present to revive the Pact, or at any rate its military clauses".<sup>47</sup>

Still, the British diplomats speculated with a possible reactivation of the alliance from time to time, more seriously in the late 1960s, as the Yugoslav–Greek relations started to

<sup>40</sup> Officially the Central Treaty Organization, a military pact formed by Britain, Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran in 1955. It was dissolved in 1979.

<sup>41</sup> Turkish prime minister Adnan Menderes (1950–1960) criticized the Yugoslav policy of non alignment during his discussions in Belgrade in May 1955 and resented that Tito officially criticized Turkey's Middle-Eastern policy. Menderes even warned the Yugoslav president that the Turkey had refrained from commenting in public the Yugoslav's stand in the Trieste question or Tito's visit to India and Burma. PRO FO 371/118031 RY10344/1.

<sup>42</sup> PRO FO 371/123860 RG10392/4.

<sup>43</sup> PRO FO 371/123860 RG10392/7.

<sup>44</sup> PRO FO 371/124284 RY10319/5.

<sup>45</sup> PRO FO 371/130124 RGC1071/4. and FO 371/130129 RGC1071/159.

<sup>46</sup> PRO FO 371/130026 RG10392/2.

<sup>47</sup> PRO FO 371/144530 RG10392/2.

improve after the coup d'état of the Greek colonels (in 1967). British diplomat D. S. L. Dobson sent a secret report to Robert Humphrey Gordon Edmonds in the Southern Department, later British high commissioner to Cyprus on 6 December 1968 in which he dealt with this possibility. Without analysing the impact of Greek domestic policy on the alliance, Dobson thought that the colonels' stance "presents no obstacles to progress" to restart the cooperation between the three military headquarters. He thought it significant that the Yugoslav ambassador had been invited to the gala dinner of the Turkish ambassador in Greece but he linked possible further improvements to the evolution of Cyprus question: "Unless some settlement acceptable to the two communities in the island is forthcoming, the situation there is seem likely to remain a source of sufficient friction between Greece and Turkey to make any reactivation of the Balkan Alliance impracticable." Even if he observed some signs of a friendlier Greek policy towards Turkey and Yugoslavia, on the whole, he was certain that "they hardly amount to evidence of a revival of interest here in the Balkan Pact".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> PRO FCO 9/868 D. S. L. Dobson to R. H. G. Edmonds, 6 December 1968.