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*Yugoslav Foreign Policy during the Suez Canal Crisis and Stability  
of the Balkan Pact 1956–1957*

*Summary*

The Suez crisis presented one of the turning points of the Cold War. Yugoslavia as a relatively small country with limited foreign policy capacity actively participated in the events caused by the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal. As Yugoslavia was a member of the Balkan Alliance and due to the fact that its allies Turkey and Greece held special interests in the region, the crisis affected the stability of the alliance, relations between the member countries, and influenced the redefinition of relations within the alliance itself.

When the crisis broke out in 1956 Yugoslavia was redefining its foreign policy priorities which were characterized by establishing an alliance with Egypt and India as the axis of the future Non-Aligned Movement. Turkey, after signing the Baghdad Pact in 1955 and after its conflict with Greece over the status of Cyprus, moved away from the allies which resulted in reducing cooperation within the Balkan Alliance. The Arab countries also attempted to find an appropriate form of cooperation with this alliance in order to limit the importance of Turkish policy in the Middle East. Israel, being unable to form an alliance with the Arab countries, strived to join the Balkan Alliance.

During the Suez Crisis the member countries of the Balkan Alliance took different stands regarding the issue. Yugoslavia supported the Egyptian action underlining Egypt's right as a sovereign country to nationalize facilities of capital importance on its territory. Turkey supported the Anglo-French action against Egypt, while Greece took a neutral stand expressing hardly manifest sympathies towards the Egyptian policy. Greece's position was by its nature most similar to the position of the United States.

The similarity of the positions of Yugoslavia and Greece regarding the Suez Crisis, as well as Yugoslavia's support regarding the issue of Cyprus, influenced the rapprochement of Yugoslavia and Greece and the slow switch from trilateral cooperation to a bilateral one based on the Balkan Alliance. In this way the relations between the member countries of the Balkan Alliance were redefined.