

*Dragan Bogetic*

*The United States of America and the formation of the Balkan Treaty 1952-1955*

*Summary*

Within the framework of the new Yugoslav foreign political orientation of “tactical approach to the West”, special significance had the establishment of the military alliance with the two NATO member-countries – Greece and Turkey. The establishment of allied relations between these three Balkan countries was conditioned by the joint fear from aggression of the Soviet Union and its satellites, and the need to strengthen their own international position. Yugoslavia, through its membership in this treaty, confirmed its loyalty to the defence program of the western powers, while avoiding to formally join their military alliance. In this way Yugoslavia succeeded in securing an impressive military assistance from the West and thus strengthened its defence and economic capabilities.

The United States of America, of course, had a very lenient attitude towards this type of alliance, because it was contributing towards strengthening of the western defence system in this strategically important region. Furthermore, they were expecting that Yugoslavia shall undertake significant obligations towards its allies, Greece and Turkey, and shall thus gradually undertake obligations towards NATO in general.

Although they were in principle supporting the formation of the Balkan Alliance, the United States, however, insisted on prolonging the final phases of this process, in order to have previously an agreement concluded between Yugoslavia and Italy regarding the Trieste question. They were concerned that an unfavorable epilogue in the solution of the Trieste crisis could cause the fall of the already unstable actual Italian government, and the establishment of a new one, which would not have a positive attitude towards the realization of the program of European defence community, which was ascribed, at that time by the American side, an extremely great importance. When this project finally suffered a total fall in September 1954, The United States of America became interested again in the Balkan Alliance, in which they saw an adequate compensation for the failed project which was, until then, their highest priority.