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Original scientific article**YUGOSLAVIA AS A LEADING NON-ALIGNED STATE
IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DURING INTERNATIONAL CRISES**

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Abstract:

The article examines whether Yugoslavia's conduct in the UN Security Council in 1972–1973 reflected a consistent and internalised non-aligned orientation, rather than situational positioning or rhetorical adaptation, and whether such consistency afforded it greater standing within the Council during a period of acute international crisis. Non-alignment is treated as a set of principles and norms expressed through state conduct and discourse, and examined with a constructivist approach highlighting the dependence of legitimacy and authority upon intersubjective recognition of role and identity. A qualitative discourse analysis is used to examine Yugoslav interventions in the Security Council, with the General Assembly discourse used as contextual grounding, in order to assess the character and purpose of the discourse in relation to stated principles.

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By examining patterns of consistency and variation in how Yugoslav representatives defined peace and security problems, responsibility, and appropriate action, the article clarifies how non-alignment was communicated in the Council, how well Yugoslavian foreign policy discourse reflected non-aligned principles, and whether this role performance generated recognised legitimacy and institutional standing. The results indicate a normative consistency in which the principles were not only communicated but advanced politically, which contributed to increased standing and prestige for Yugoslavia.

KEY WORDS:

Yugoslavia, Security Council, Constructivism, Discourse analysis, Non-Alignment

SAŽETAK:

Članak ispituje da li je ponašanje Jugoslavije u Savjetu bezbjednosti UN-a 1972-1973 odražavalo dosljednu i internalizovanu nesvrstanu orijentaciju, umjesto situacionog pozicioniranja ili retoričke adaptacije, i da li joj je takva dosljednost obezbijedila veći ugled unutar Savjeta tokom perioda akutne međunarodne krize. Nesvrstanost se tretira kao skup principa i normi izraženih kroz ponašanje države i njen diskurs, i ispituje se konstruktivističkim pristupom koji naglašava zavisnost legitimiteta i autoriteta od intersubjektivnog priznanja uloge i identiteta. Kvalitativna analiza diskursa koristi se za ispitivanje jugoslovenskih intervencija u Savjetu bezbjednosti, pri čemu se diskurs u Generalnoj skupštini koristi kao kontekstualno utemeljenje, kako bi se procijenili karakter i svrha diskursa u odnosu na navedene principe. Ispitujući obrasce dosljednosti i varijacije u načinu na koji su jugoslovenski predstavnici definisali probleme mira i bezbjednosti, odgovornost i odgovarajuće djelovanje, članak razjašnjava kako je nesvrstanost komunicirana u Savjetu, koliko je jugoslovenski spoljnopolitički diskurs odražavao nesvrstane principe, i da li je ovo izvođenje uloge proizvelo priznati legitimitet i institucionalni ugled. Rezultati ukazuju na normativnu dosljednost u kojoj principi nijesu samo komunicirani već i politički unaprijeđeni, što je doprinijelo povećanom ugledu i prestižu Jugoslavije.

KLJUČNE REČI:

Jugoslavija, Savjet bezbjednosti, konstruktivizam, analiza diskursa, nesvrstanost

INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War, the United Nations Organisation (UN) was a unique global platform in which states outside of blocks could manifest their policies and explain their political positions, and to do so while contesting dominant interpretations of security. For Yugoslavia, which emerged in the late forties as a state unwilling to bind itself to either bloc, the UN was a central platform for foreign policy activity and for the communication of its policy principles. This role was particularly visible during periods of international crisis, when questions of force, sovereignty, and legitimacy were openly contested within the Security Council. Yugoslavia's position as a founding and leading member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) allowed it a special position within the UN, allowing for greater engagement and visibility. As such a need arises to examine not only the emergence and practice of non-alignment, or Yugoslavia's broader diplomatic strategy, but also how non-alignment was communicated and sustained in practice within the institutional setting of the Council itself. The question of whether Yugoslavia's conduct in the Council reflected a consistent and internalised non-aligned orientation, rather than situational positioning or rhetorical adaptation, as well as whether this gave it a stronger position and more prestige, is what guides this article. It endeavours to answer this by analysing Yugoslavia's two years in the Council in the early seventies, a period marked by multiple acute and chronic international crises. The examination focuses on how Yugoslavia communicated non-aligned principles in Council debates, and how these positions were maintained across different issue areas.

The analysis treats non-alignment as a set of principles and norms expressed through state conduct and discourse, using a constructivist understanding of international politics in which state behaviour is inseparable from the identities and norms through which interests are constituted, and in which legitimacy within institutions depends on recognition and social acceptance rather than material power alone. The argument of the article is that Yugoslavia did in fact consistently articulate and follow the principles of the NAM in the Coun-

cil, and that this afforded it greater authority within the Council, allowing it to act as a recognised non-aligned actor during a period of international crisis. Therefore, a qualitative discourse analysis is conducted on Yugoslavia's interventions and argumentative framing in the Council debates. Thus the article contributes to a more precise understanding of how non-alignment functioned as an influential political orientation within international institutions, as well as to a better understanding of the character of Yugoslavia's foreign policy, and how smaller and non-aligned states such as it could acquire legitimacy and influence within the Council and through normative consistency and discourse. The article is structured as follows. Opening with a literature review examining the values and development of the movement, it continues with a review of theoretical literature which leads into the theoretical framework. This enables first a contextualisation of Yugoslavia's action in the UN through its activities in the General Assembly, and afterwards an empirical analysis of its term in the Council. It concludes with a conclusion which discusses the results in relation to the theoretical approach.

YUGOSLAVIA AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

After a period where it moved away from Soviet domination and temporarily relied on western support in the early fifties, Yugoslavia took a non-block position, recognising political influence attached to aid from any power. It sought to resolve its international isolation through the UN and subsequently through establishing contacts with countries of the global south. This approach preceded the formal articulation of non-alignment and placed the UN at the center of Yugoslavia's foreign policy activity before the emergence of the Movement as an organized framework.¹ By the 1970s, Yugoslavia had attained a stable and positive international position and prestige, including a leadership role within the Non-Aligned Movement and extensive activity in the United Nations General Assembly, which allowed it to make use of the détente period and the mid-1960s reform of the Security Council that expanded and geographically diversified non-permanent membership in line with decolonisation and the

emergence of new states. Yugoslav and non-aligned principles were grounded in the UN Charter and included the prohibition of territorial acquisition by force, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, self-determination of peoples, and the free choice of internal political systems.²

The move to a non-aligned policy represented a turning point in Yugoslav foreign policy, opening a new chapter through a move outside blocs and the beginning of cooperation with post-colonial states of the global south on a global level. Yugoslavia created a role for itself on the global stage through cooperation with newly independent states in order to maintain an independent extra-bloc position, as it could not act independently in Europe and did not seek to replace dependence on one power with dependence on another. Cooperation with these new states was parallel to its activity in the UN, where it sought a more active role while promoting equality for smaller states, rejecting hegemony and blocs, and calling for more democratic international relations. In order to avoid long-term isolation, It continued building a polycentric movement, connecting with other countries that rejected bloc affiliation and expressing ambitions to alter the structure of world relations. Yugoslavia considered that the problems of the global south were global-level problems directly connected to its own vulnerability, which made it easier to find new allies and to strengthen the position of all movement members, even though the organization of the movement lacked a clearly defined long-term plan ³

Yugoslavian initiatives were well received in the global south and served to establish contacts and explore possibilities for multilateral activities, placing its policy within global frameworks and declaring that development could occur only through peace and cooperation through coexistence, thus gaining new allies. During the period of the emergence of non-alignment, the movement relied on the UN and was dependent on it, as the organization functioned as the only forum for many emerging and small states. Newly formed states of the global south faced instability, bipolar pressure, frequent interventions, and severe underdevelopment, often inheriting artificial borders from colonialism,

and Yugoslavia offered them a foreign policy direction grounded in cooperation, coexistence, and multilateral engagement.⁴ The movement rejected the division of the world into blocs and spheres of influence, opposed neocolonialism and interference in internal affairs, and called for peaceful coexistence between states with different political systems. Its policy emphasized equality among states, abolition of spheres of interest, opposition to the use of force and armament as instruments of international politics, and preference for diplomatic solutions. Its aim was to preserve the independence of its members through joint action and solidarity. Active coexistence was provided as an alternative to bloc confrontation, with cooperation for peace as the central objective, and Yugoslavia linked these principles to cooperation within the UN and to collective security without domination by great powers, framing non-alignment as compatible with the UN Charter and a multilateral international order.⁵

Early coordination among non-aligned states took place largely through the UN General Assembly, where their principles of coexistence, self-determination, decolonization, and disarmament were promoted. During the 1960s, leading non-aligned states coordinated action at the General Assembly with the aim of reducing global tensions and promoting peaceful resolution of Cold War conflicts.⁶ Yugoslavia thus successfully identified an opportunity in the global south and oriented heterogeneous post-colonial states toward global cooperation that reduced focus on regional conflicts. It was described that the primary global division lay between North and South rather than East and West, and that collective action by weaker states could generate a significant voice in support of UN principles aimed at preserving independence and avoiding involvement in external wars and political systems. Yugoslavia faced pressures similar to those confronting states from the global south and thus adapted to international developments to expand its global influence despite its constrained position in Europe. The main achievement of this campaign was a conference of the non-aligned states held in 1961 in Belgrade, the goal of which was to achieve practical multilateral cooperation against neocolonialism and blocs. Membership criteria included independent foreign policy and support for coexistence, while the conference emphasized peaceful resolution of conflicts, neutrality of

participating states, and the role of the UN as the proper forum for addressing global problems.⁷

The Movement opposed persistent bloc confrontation, the pressure brought to bear upon weaker states, and restrictions on sovereignty produced by competing hegemonies. Military alliances and continuous armament generated permanent instability and limited the security of non-aligned states, contradicting the principles of the UN Charter and sustaining unequal international relations. It's criticism of the international system centered on the use of force as an instrument of foreign policy primarily available to powerful states, creating hegemonism and undermining equality and sovereignty. The concept of coexistence was conceived as a means for newly independent states to avoid subordination to blocs, preserve freedom of action, protect vital interests, and pursue development through collective solidarity while limiting external pressure, and it became a central non-aligned principle.⁸ Even so, while the Security Council's main objective was resolving crises, its operation was constrained by the volume of conflicts and internal contradictions produced by blocs and bipolarity. Protection of great-power interests predominated in practice, leading to frequent absence of intervention, limiting its focus to preventive and reactive diplomacy. Thus, the General assembly was the primary route through which smaller states could protect their interests, including Yugoslavia, and they developed many resolutions in that body while making use of their increasing number. Yugoslavia consistently advocated strengthening the role of the United Nations and expanding the authority of the Assembly.⁹

A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO YUGOSLAVIAN FOREIGN POLICY

As the article is concerned with the deeper acceptance of non-aligned principles into the ideological and practical positions of Yugoslavia, an analysis of its foreign policy requires a special attention to ideas and identity as constantly evolving. Developing a conventional constructivist position, Wendt argues that international politics is structured primarily by social rather than material forc-

es, with these social structures shaping the identities, interests, and behaviour of states.¹⁰ From this perspective, identities are understood as intersubjective and continually evolving, produced and reproduced through interaction rather than fixed by material capabilities or systemic position. Thus, outcomes of rivalry or cooperation within an anarchic international system depend not on anarchy itself, but on the intersubjective identities of actors as socially constructed through their interactions. State identity, in this account, emerges from a combination of internal and external policy practices and remains fluid, changing as states interact with others and respond to their reactions, with all actions undertaken by states affecting both their own identity and how they are perceived by others, which in turn shapes their interests.¹¹ Interests thus do not precede interaction but emerge from both interaction and identity, which is continuously constructed and constrains what states perceive as acceptable behaviour and how they respond to the actions and ideas of others.¹² From there, Wendt maintains that relationships with, and understandings of, the political other form the basis of identity and therefore security, as states are threatened primarily by the identity-based interests of other states rather than by material capabilities alone.¹³ Adler supports this by arguing that states can reshape the social structures they exist in through their practices and interactions, through which action their own state identities and interests can be influenced in return.¹⁴

Furthermore, constructivism directs attention toward the role of norms and ideas in mediating the relationship between identity and interests. Hopf takes the position that norm adoption constitutes a primary mechanism through which identities and interests are negotiated, while also stressing that the range of adoptable norms is itself conditioned by existing identities. For Hopf, agency and structure are mutually constituted, such that identity can be intersubjectively changed through social interaction, with identities providing a degree of predictability and order while remaining in constant flux as state action continuously reshapes perception and interest formation.¹⁵ From a related perspective, Guzzini argues that the international system has an inherently social character, with states continuously producing and reproducing its rules

and norms through practice, and that policies and actions are driven less by rational choice than by ideas, norms, and political culture, as well as by the roles states assign to themselves and to others.¹⁶ Finnemore and Sikkink similarly argue that shared beliefs construct the identities of international actors and shape their preferences, interests, and policies, while contestation over these beliefs is closely linked to role definitions that underpin both identity formation and political action.¹⁷ In this framework, norm diffusion occurs through normative entrepreneurship and social interaction, reaching a tipping point when norms become widely accepted standards of appropriate behaviour.¹⁸ Checkel supports this view by arguing that norm promotion operates as a form of influence aimed at shaping the identity and interests of other states while simultaneously legitimising particular policies, with norm internalisation occurring through sustained interaction and discourse rather than coercion.¹⁹

These insights extend to the operation of international institutions, where Onuf argues that rules perform both regulatory and constitutive functions by guiding behaviour while simultaneously defining the identities and capacities of actors, such that every act of compliance or violation transforms international society itself.²⁰ Hurd argues that within institutional settings such as the Security Council, authority and power are closely tied to legitimacy rather than to formal status alone, and that even non-permanent membership provides both real and symbolic power derived from the legitimacy of the institution despite the unequal position of non-permanent members vis-à-vis permanent states. In this view, the effectiveness of Council decisions depends on compliance and support from other states, making legitimacy a central condition for the exercise of institutional authority.²¹ Ruggie warns that the structure of the Council can enable permanent members to practice a narrow form of multilateralism that excludes other states, incentivising the perpetuation of existing hierarchies.²² Voeten adds that status within the Council confers identity and authority that increase a state's leverage both inside the institution and in broader multilateral bargaining, allowing states to act beyond the Council while drawing on its legitimising effects. Collective legitimisation, in turn, enhances the organisation's capacity to influence state behaviour, rendering le-

gitimacy indispensable for the functioning of the Council given its ability to compel compliance.²³ Milliken argues that discourse is central to these processes, as it shapes identity and social reality and normalises, justifies, or excludes particular state actions, thereby structuring threat perception, authority, and legitimacy within institutional contexts.²⁴

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The article treats non-alignment as a set of principles and norms that can be examined through state conduct and discourse, and it is understood as a foreign-policy orientation rejecting formal alignment with military or political blocs and opposing the division of the world into spheres of influence. Its core principles include respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, the prohibition of territorial acquisition by force, self-determination of peoples, equality among states, peaceful coexistence between different political systems, and preference for diplomatic solutions over the use of force. These principles provide the standard against which Yugoslavia's conduct in the Security Council is assessed. The analytical approach is based on the assumption that state behaviour cannot be analysed independently of the identities through which interests are constituted, nor of the discursive and institutional contexts in which those identities are enacted. Identity is understood as emerging through practice, interaction, and recognition, while norms operate as mechanisms through which identity and interest are articulated and stabilised. In institutional settings, shared understandings of threats and appropriate responses may emerge through social interaction, enabling groups of states to adopt common interpretations of security problems. Even within formally constrained institutions such as the Security Council, actors may acquire influence through recognised and accepted conduct and the consistent promotion of their normative positions.

Within this framework, the article examines how Yugoslavia articulated and sustained a non-aligned position through its discourse during its non-perma-

nent membership in the Security Council in 1972–1973, a period marked by international crises. Within it, legitimacy and authority are therefore treated as outcomes of discourse, compliance, and social acceptance rather than as functions of material power alone. The central research question is whether Yugoslavia acted in accordance with non-aligned principles in this institutional setting, and whether sustained discursive and practical consistency reflected an internalised non-aligned orientation that contributed to its standing and authority. As far as method is concerned, the analysis relies on qualitative discourse analysis of Yugoslav statements in Security Council debates, using verbatim meeting records, official UN documents, and archival material. Discursive consistency is assessed by examining whether Yugoslavia articulated these principles across different crisis contexts and whether its positions remained stable under political pressure.

YUGOSLAVIA'S ACTIVITIES IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

At the General Assembly in 1970, Yugoslavia's representatives expressed its general foreign policy position at the time, stating that the world had changed significantly since the founding of the UN, yet peace remained neither lasting nor complete, as many peoples continued to live under conflict and domination. They argued that the principles of the Charter, including sovereignty, independence, and freedom, were increasingly subordinated to the interests of powerful states, while inequality and discrimination undermined their application. They called on member states to reject resignation and insist on principled engagement. The UN was presented as an indispensable framework for cooperation on the basis of equality, yet one that had failed to preserve peace and promote development because international relations remained dominated by blocs and power politics. They argued that the organisation should not merely reflect global developments but act as a central political actor in which no state dominates and in which universality is realised. They emphasised the close connection between the UN and the NAM and argued that strengthening

the UN was inseparable from the creation of more democratic international relations. They criticised the concentration of decisions on war and peace in the hands of a few states, insisted on the unconditional application of Charter obligations, welcomed détente in Europe while stressing its global relevance, and linked the persistence of crises to the continued reliance on force by the great powers.²⁵

Yugoslav representatives continued the same discourse on the UN and the NAM by focusing on decolonisation as one of the organisation's central achievements and as a process that remained incomplete. The UN was presented as having played a decisive role in the struggle of national liberation movements and in the admission of more than sixty newly independent states, through which formerly dependent peoples became subjects of international relations, many of whom rejected bloc affiliation and joined the NAM. At the same time, concern was expressed over the slowing of decolonisation at its final stage, leaving large parts of the world under continued foreign domination maintained by force. They therefore called for a move from agreement on principles to action within the organisation, including the termination of cooperation with colonial regimes, and active support for liberation movements, in line with positions adopted within the NAM. They added that international relations had to be governed especially by equality among states, non-interference, and the universal application of all Charter principles, in order to lead to general independence, development, and peace. The persistence of crises was still attributed to violations of these principles and to the continued use of force, while guarded confidence was expressed that UN decolonisation and development documents could serve as a basis for improving international relations if implemented consistently rather than remaining declaratory.²⁶

In 1971, Yugoslavia's representatives continued this discourse by stressing that international conflicts could no longer be treated as isolated events, as local wars and crises increasingly produced wider global repercussions and generated new tensions elsewhere. External interventions and the use of force were presented as producing only temporary results, as they ultimately strength-

ened resistance and reinforced the determination of affected peoples to defend their sovereignty and integrity. They reiterated the long-standing position that differences in political and social systems were not the cause of war and should instead form the basis for peaceful coexistence, which required overcoming bloc divisions and developing collective security in an increasingly politically and economically interdependent world. While acknowledging that the UN had failed to fully implement its resolutions and principles, the organisation was credited with contributing to certain stabilising effects, including reduced tensions compared to earlier periods and the expansion of diplomatic contacts. They presented Yugoslavia's broad network of relations with states of different systems as an example of this approach.²⁷

In 1972, they largely continued the established discourse while placing particular emphasis on détente, its limits, and the responsibilities of the UN within it. While welcoming the easing of tensions and negotiations between the great powers, They stressed that their relations could not be treated as a purely bilateral matter, as they directly shaped the position and security of all other states. Détente was therefore framed as meaningful only if it became universal and transparent rather than monopolised by great powers. They warned that imperialism, hegemony, inequality, and interference in internal affairs persisted despite reduced risks of direct great-power conflict, and that the chronic problems of war, underdevelopment, and instability remained unresolved due to weak implementation of UN resolutions. The UN was again called upon to assume a more active role, moving beyond declaratory commitments toward concrete action in support of peace, decolonisation, and development. European détente was welcomed, but only insofar as it contributed to global détente and did not reinforce bloc structures, while disarmament, development, and reform of international economic relations were presented as inseparable from lasting peace. They also reaffirmed the need for democratised international relations, universal application of UN principles, and support for newly independent states as part of the UN's responsibility to protect independence and peace.²⁸

In 1973, Yugoslav representatives stated that Yugoslavia had consistently opposed the use of force in relations between states and supported the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction as essential conditions for international security. The renunciation of force was presented as a prerequisite for peaceful cooperation and coexistence between states with different political and social systems, while the continued reliance on force was described as a central feature of international relations that disproportionately affected smaller and weaker countries. Reference was made to the prolonged conflicts and colonial domination, economic pressure, and political interference, as evidence that force continued to shape international life in multiple forms. The use of force was linked to inequality and subjugation, with emphasis placed on the need to address these underlying conditions rather than their consequences alone. They also argued that without the elimination of force and its causes, peaceful coexistence, international security, and lasting peace could not be achieved.²⁹

At the time both German states were admitted into the UN, and Yugoslavian representatives described this as a significant step toward greater universality of the UN, presenting it as evidence of the organisation's endurance and continuing relevance as membership expanded without withdrawals. Yugoslavia was described as a founding member of both the UN and the NAM, a peaceful state that had endured aggression and defended its independence, and that consistently supported the overcoming of divisions and confrontations in international relations. Particular emphasis was placed on positive developments in Europe, including détente and the normalisation of relations, which they framed as the result of long-standing advocacy for coexistence, dialogue, and acceptance of post-war realities. They reiterated that stability and security could only be built on relations grounded in equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference, and freedom from threats and the use of force, regardless of political or social systems. Likewise it was stressed that détente could not remain confined to Europe, as lasting peace required its universal extension, given that conflicts and crises elsewhere directly undermined continental security. Decolonisation was presented as an unfinished process, with Yugoslavia aligning itself with non-aligned and progressive states supporting

liberation, political and economic emancipation, and development, while expressing solidarity with peoples in the Caribbean and Latin America pursuing independence.³⁰

They further addressed decolonisation, disarmament, and the role of the UN as interconnected questions of equality, development, and peace. Decolonisation was described as having entered a period of stagnation after earlier successes, with responsibility attributed to the obstruction of colonial and reactionary regimes, while foreign domination remained widespread and obstructed self-determination, freedom, and independence. Although détente was welcomed as a positive trend, it was stressed that it had not been accompanied by a meaningful reduction in armaments. They also emphasised the UN's concrete contributions, particularly in decolonisation and the promotion of Charter principles, while warning that marginalising the organisation, including in the Middle East where it acted on the basis of Council resolutions, would undermine both peace efforts and international relations more broadly. Caution was expressed against premature optimism, as aggression, colonial domination, interference in internal affairs, and imperial practices were described as ongoing realities. They reaffirmed support for universality, sovereign equality, non-use of force, and self-determination as the foundations of international order, arguing that bilateral and regional initiatives could only be effective within a genuinely multilateral and democratised framework, and emphasising the commitment of non-aligned states to the UN and its Charter as the most effective instrument for advancing development and strengthening international peace through implementation rather than declaration alone.³¹

AN ANALYSIS OF YUGOSLAVIAN DISCOURSE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

Yugoslavia had a special interest in African problems during the period, as many NAM members were from the continent, and were directly engaged in struggles against colonial domination, especially in southern Africa. Yugosla-

via's representatives framed the crisis as a direct challenge to the principles of sovereignty, equality, and peaceful conflict resolution, being not isolated incidents but as part of a broader pattern of colonialism threatening peace and stability beyond the region itself. Violations of territorial integrity and international law were treated as matters of general concern to all members of the UN, since they undermined the universality of Charter obligations and weakened the authority of the organisation. They connected the persistence of crisis to the lack of implementation of UN decisions by powerful states, calling for greater action because the credibility of the Council depended on its readiness to defend the sovereignty of its members through concrete and timely measures. Support for states exposed to external pressure was presented as consistent with the principles of non-alignment and collective responsibility, and solidarity among non-aligned and peace-oriented countries was invoked as evidence that opposition to domination and force rested on widely shared positions rather than regional or ideological alignment.³²

Even so, they described the UN as a near-universal organisation which thus had the greatest influence on international peace and security, and presented Yugoslavia's foreign policy as being guided by the principles of sovereign equality of all peoples, large and small, non-interference, and respect for territorial integrity. As they expressed full commitment to the Organisation they supported the idea that emerged for holding a Council meeting in Africa. They said it would be a step that would strengthen participation from a continent whose problems were described as directly linked to international peace and security, while demonstrating collective political will to address the continent's acute crises, adding that any act of international violence against a small state required immediate attention because peace and security had to be protected at the outset of aggression (Security Council, 1972b). In relation to that they demanded respect for self-determination against Apartheid rule, describing it as neocolonial, and insisted that the Council existed so that peoples would not have to endure aggression and domination. They called on all states to apply UN sanctions thoroughly and responsibly. They argued that the UN had to remain vigilant and demonstrate that great power vetoes did not end supervision

or further discussion, while lamenting that continued breeches to the sanction enforcement were attempts by great powers to weaken collective action. They called on sustained pressure, particularly on major powers, to secure compliance and prevent any weakening of sanctions, framing this as a test of the Council's credibility and of the universal application of its decisions.³³

Yugoslav representatives stated that the Council had a continuing responsibility to remain seized of the chronic problems such as with Rhodesia, and to insist on implementation rather than further delay. They argued that its population had rejected the settlement offered by the regime, which they argued was illegal, and that it thus continued its struggle for rights and independence, while repression and racial discrimination persisted. This was presented as a threat to regional peace, describing unity on the issue among African states and support from non-aligned countries as evidence that the issue concerned self-determination and equality rather than internal administration. It was stated that international recognition of independence could be acceptable only after the end of minority rule and the establishment of majority government, and that decisions on the political future had to rest on one person one vote, with any negotiating effort requiring consultation with, and consent of, the representatives of the majority population. The right of peoples under repression to pursue national liberation by all available means, including armed struggle, was affirmed, while a distinction was drawn between legitimate guerrilla warfare and acts described as terrorism. Sanctions were again presented as the strongest available instrument, with emphasis on maintaining and strengthening them and condemning evasion, including through those enabling the regime, with reference to Portugal and South Africa, while supporting measures to reinforce monitoring and implementation.³⁴

Yugoslav representatives also expressed strong concern over an economic blockade and military moves carried out by the regime in Rhodesia, which they framed as illegal and racist, against Zambia, an important non-aligned state, presenting these measures as a direct and immediate threat to peace and security. Yugoslavia's response was quick and decisive and supported by messages

of solidarity from non-aligned countries, as it argued that the Council had an obligation to defend peaceful states against aggression while also addressing the basic causes of tension in the region. The crisis was placed within a wider pattern created by the policies of colonialism and apartheid pursued by Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portugal, and by their military cooperation against African liberation movements, presented as a main source of insecurity. They argued that such crises could not be treated as small or local, warning that conflicts left without resolution and without UN action on both causes and consequences could develop into far wider international crises, and that accumulated explosive potential in southern Africa could lead to broader deterioration, including because of great-power strategic interests and rivalry. They therefore called for condemnation of Rhodesia and the support it received, for the withdrawal of South African forces, for strengthened sanctions with prevention of violations, and for economic assistance to Zambia through the UN as part of preventing further escalation.³⁵

Yugoslav representatives stated that the UN, acting under its mandate regarding Namibia, had made several unsuccessful attempts to end what they described as an unacceptable situation in the territory, and recalled that one of the basic aims of Yugoslavia's policy was the abolition of colonialism, which was presented as the basis for its consistent support for struggles for freedom. They argued that the regime in South Africa had approached contacts with the UN without good faith and had continued its rule in Namibia through repression and apartheid in order to prevent self-determination and independence, while the liberation organisation was presented as the representative of the legitimate rights of the people. Cooperation between South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal was condemned, with the three regimes described as fascist and colonial, and it was added that they enjoyed Western support grounded in shared interests, especially economic ones, while pursuing aggressive policies toward neighbouring independent states and thereby constituting a threat to peace and security. They stated that South Africa's refusal to accept self-determination was wholly unacceptable and that the only effect of dialogue had been to reveal Pretoria's intentions, leaving no reason to continue it. Since peaceful

solutions were presented as impossible through cooperation with racist regimes, they supported armed struggle as the remaining path to freedom and reiterated moral, political, and material support for the liberation struggle,³⁶

In early 1973 the government of Panama managed to be granted the right to host Council meetings, through help from states from the global south, for a session devoted to discussing measures for the strengthening of peace and security. Yugoslav representatives supported the proposal, presenting this as consistent with Charter principles on sovereignty, peace, independence, and self-determination and as a necessary way to direct attention toward the global south. They described the meetings as a form of preventive diplomacy, necessary precisely because action should not wait for crises to erupt, and it was added that such sessions should contribute to resolving open questions through respect for legitimate rights and by taking regional concerns seriously, with the strengthening of the UN and its principles presented as a general interest for states that relied on its role and authority. They noted that the UN was a platform that non-aligned states depended on, arguing for a further strengthening of its role, and argued that Yugoslavia's foreign policy is close to the UN's general interest.³⁷ During the sessions a leader of the Guinea-Bissau liberation movement was assassinated, and the representatives condemned it as an attack by colonialists attempting to halt decolonisation and retain domination, while insisting that such acts would not slow the struggle for freedom. They also welcomed the agreements ending the war in Vietnam as a victory for peaceful forces and as enabling the Vietnamese people to decide their future without external interference, with expectations of wider peace and space for development and the defence of independence. In that context they reaffirmed support for the Panama meetings and presented them as a practical step to keep the Council engaged with regional issues and to reduce the risk of future conflict.³⁸

The representatives praised the sessions in Panama as historic and symbolic, calling for a more democratic international order in which the concerns of smaller states were treated as matters of common responsibility. They ex-

pressed support for Panama's claim to full sovereignty, and they opposed the presence of foreign bases and armed forces on another state's territory against that state's will, treating this as incompatible with sovereignty and territorial integrity. They argued that economic emancipation was a condition of peace, development, and wider security, and that the UN should do more to support decolonisation and the right to non-interference, adding that the latter was a major source of crises and as a challenge to independence and sovereignty. They described Yugoslavia as an independent and non-aligned state identifying with these concerns, supporting the elimination of remaining forms of colonialism and foreign domination in the region and beyond, and calling for cooperation and peaceful coexistence on the basis of sovereign equality and respect for different political and economic systems. They also argued that confrontation had to be replaced by confrontation through solidarity, shared commitment and preventive action.³⁹

One of Yugoslavia's closest non-aligned allies, Egypt, was directly involved in the greatest security crisis of the time, the conflict in the middle east between Arab states and Israel. In 1972 tensions began to increase in the region due to Israeli aggression against Lebanon. In related Council discussions, Yugoslav representatives framed the incident as a clear violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity and warned that unresolved or delayed action on such crises created conditions for repeated violence that could escalate beyond international control, with the episode presented as consistent with a wider pattern attributed to policies of dominance, territorial expansion and annexation sustained through refusal of compromise and withdrawal, and with self-defence claims rejected as incompatible with the Council's prior positions and the inadmissibility of force-based outcomes.⁴⁰ When a draft resolution was negotiated, Yugoslavia criticised it as too weak, objecting to language seen as equating aggressor and victim and thereby risking a permissive precedent, while pressing for explicit condemnation paired with a clear affirmation of Lebanon's sovereignty and integrity, and it maintained this stance through separate voting by opposing the contested preambular framing while supporting an operative demand for immediate cessation of military action and withdrawal from Leb-

anese territory.⁴¹ In continued deliberations, Yugoslavia again pressed for focused decision-making and restated that Council credibility depended on more than routine statements, maintaining that any outcome had to keep responsibility clear and reinforce the protection of Lebanon's independence and territorial integrity as the basis for preventing repetition.⁴²

Yugoslav representatives later argued that expectations of rapid implementation of Council decisions had failed, treating Israel's continued non-compliance as the central obstacle and insisting that obligations established by the Council were clear, calling for respect both the text and spirit of the UN decisions.⁴³ They presented continued Council condemnations as politically meaningful even when ignored in practice, since they reaffirmed Charter principles against aggression, maintained institutional visibility of violations, and sustained pressure by demonstrating that the Council was not indifferent to attacks on another state's territory, while also justifying Yugoslavia's sponsorship and support for a follow-up draft as aimed to prevent further deterioration by requiring compliance with an agreed obligation.⁴⁴ When the same pattern reappeared in 1973, They rejected any stance that treated repeated attacks as normal or undeserving of full attention, warning that such tolerance would legitimise force and encourage further escalation, and he called for the Council to react each time peace was breached in order to demonstrate that illegal violence would not be accepted as routine. They also argued that the Council could not manage consequences without addressing causes and that withdrawal and the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by force remained a collective responsibility that the organisation could not evade.⁴⁵

The representatives presented Yugoslavia as an independent and non-aligned Mediterranean state with a direct interest in a long-term solution, arguing that the crisis was not local but a major global security focus whose unresolved status undermined détente and carried wider risks of escalation. They linked this to the continued non-implementation of Council decisions and the persistence of occupation, describing conditions in the occupied territories as deteriorating through practices portrayed as contrary to UN resolutions and

international law. They restated Yugoslavia's consistent position against the use of force and territorial acquisition by war, demanded full withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 alongside respect for the sovereignty and security of all states, calling for more active Council mediation and implementation to prevent further deterioration beyond control.⁴⁶ They further promoted a draft resolution as a minimal and balanced effort grounded in shared understandings of urgency and the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by force, again attributing deadlock to refusal of cooperation with UN decisions and to the continuation of occupation as a basis for annexation, while insisting that the Palestinian question had to be treated as a necessary factor in any settlement and that the Council's minimum responsibility was sustained implementation and diplomatic engagement to protect regional security with spillover implications for the Mediterranean and Europe.⁴⁷

As war erupted in 1973, Yugoslav representatives framed the escalation as the consequence of sustained aggression and occupation and argued that Israeli military operations violated international law and tested the Security Council's capacity to maintain peace after six years of unresolved conflict. They blamed the war on what they considered continuous Israeli aggression against Arab states, demanded Israel withdraw from occupied territories, and linked this stance to non-aligned positions endorsed at the movement's recent summit. They warned that détente could not be stabilised if major crises in the global south remained unresolved and insisted that security could not rest on occupation, force, or military superiority, demanding respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and self-determination.⁴⁸ In subsequent debates on ceasefire arrangements, Yugoslavia supported actions to maintain a stable truce, insisting that the Council had a Charter duty to compel compliance, stop military activity, and begin the withdrawal process associated with its earlier resolutions before negotiations, warning that failure to secure an actual ceasefire risked renewed territorial gains and future war.⁴⁹ They further criticised a pattern in which implementation became dependent on fragile ceasefires managed primarily by the superpowers, arguing that this could not substitute for collective Council responsibility, warning against the monopolisation of global security

questions by a small group of states, and calling for additional collective measures, including an expanded UN role on the ground, if the ceasefire could not be enforced and the conflict threatened to widen.⁵⁰

After a ceasefire was reached, Yugoslav representatives stressed that the Council acted on behalf of the entire membership and argued that the non-aligned members, guided by a duty to prevent aggression and assist those complying with Council decisions, called for urgent respect of the ceasefire, reinforcement of UN observers, intensified activity by the Secretary-General, and broader cooperation among members, including a UN emergency force as an expression of a more direct organisational role in crisis management. This was presented as consistent with non-aligned positions on strengthening the UN's role in international peace and security and as a means of creating a political and physical UN presence capable of preventing renewed escalation.⁵¹ They also supported the work of the Secretary-General's and argued that the UN had the leading role in maintaining a ceasefire and facilitating withdrawal, while emphasising that responsibility for this lay with the Council as a whole. They presented the role of the Council in the ending of hostilities as a demonstration of the UN's effectiveness as an instrument for containing major confrontation and as evidence that further strengthening depended on political will rather than institutional limits.⁵² As diplomatic efforts moved toward negotiations, Yugoslavia cooperated with other non-permanent members in endorsing a draft that reaffirmed the Council's responsibility for peace and supported the convening of the Geneva conference in line with UN resolutions, again framing the process as dependent on a UN-led approach.⁵³

CONCLUSION

Within the examined Council discussions, Yugoslavia's interventions appear less as situational positioning than as the sustained enactment of a recognisable non-aligned orientation. The same discourse is carried through all three examples related to ongoing crises, and the solutions offered are consistent

with each other and with non-aligned principles. These principles, such as sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, self-determination, and the inadmissibility of territorial acquisition by force, are used in the discourse as norms and standards that should structure Council behaviour, rather than as declaratory commitments. Not only are the principles invoked, but it is insistent that the Council's authority depends on their visible defence precisely in those settings where they are most often compromised, when smaller states face domination or threat, and when repeated breaches of peace become dismissed as routine issues. The discourse is consistent and not limited to condemnation, as principles are persistently linked to institutional practice through a repeating emphasis on implementation, monitoring, sanctions, and the keeping of chronic issues on the agenda rather than tacitly accepting non-compliance

In the case of the Africa-related discussions, domination and apartheid were framed as problems whose acceptance as regional would weaken the universality the Charter claims, as well as the credibility of collective security. In the Latin-American discussions, the Council's relevance is tied to its willingness to treat the concerns of newly independent and non-aligned states as part of international peace and security, and to strengthen preventive engagement rather than waiting for escalation. In the Middle East discussions, especially during the 1973 war, the same argumentative structure is produced. Occupation and the use of force are treated as structurally and normatively destabilising, while condemnation is maintained as politically meaningful even when ignored, and responsibility is framed as collective and UN-centred rather than reducible to superpower management. Non-alignment was thus communicated laterally not as a label but as a working interpretation of what legitimate security practice inside the Council requires. Yugoslavia could not remove structural hierarchy, compel compliance, or prevent major powers from narrowing collective outcomes, but its actions were significant, having narrower but still consequential effect. Its consistent and principled framing across crises allowed it to maintain its standing as a credible defender of Charter universality and the security interests of weaker states, and to link that position to demands for institutional follow-through, thereby increasing its position in the non-aligned movement.

Legitimacy and authority within the Council depend on recognition and social acceptance, and a continual connection-making between Charter principles with concrete expectations of Council practice was a way in which such recognition is sought and maintained. The standing that emerges is therefore primarily institutional and reputational, but it remains politically relevant in a setting where legitimacy shapes how responsibility is defined and how the organisation's role is contested. When contextualised alongside the General Assembly discourse which preceded it, the conduct of Yugoslavia in the Council demonstrates how non-alignment operated in institutional practice through a leading member which manifested its principles in practice. Its insistence on universality, resistance to domination and monopolisation, and the demand to move from declaration to implementation was carried into Council debates, where it was operationalised and applied to concrete crisis settings. This therefore indicates that normative consistency can function as a practical resource for smaller non-permanent members, enabling them to sustain credibility when pressing claims about Council responsibility, universality, and implementation. This orientation towards the common principles and norms which the UN and the movement shared, which was reproduced in a disciplined and steadfast manner, allowed a smaller state such as Yugoslavia to increase its international standing during a period in which the meaning of security, legitimacy, and institutional authority was repeatedly contest.

NOTES:

¹ Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu*, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije (INIS), Beograd, 2010, pp. 5–20.

² Jadranka Jovanović, *Jugoslavija i Savet Bezbednosti Organizacije Ujedinjenih Nacija*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Beograd, 1990, pp. 10–15; Jadranka Jovanović, *Jugoslavija u organizaciji OUN 1945–1953*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Beograd, 1985, pp. 3–25.

³ Ljubodrag Dimić, Dragan Bogetić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja*, Zavod za udžbenike, Beograd, 2013, pp. 11–22; Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu*, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije (INIS), Beograd, 2010, pp. 5–20.

⁴ Leo Mates, *Međunarodni odnosi socijalističke Jugoslavije*, Nolit, Beograd, 1976, pp. 113–132; Jan Arne Westad, *Globalni hladni rat*, Arhipelag, Beograd, 2008, pp. 39–58, 70–82.

⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *Hladni rat*, Klio, Beograd, 2003, pp. 45–7; Ljubodrag Dimić, Dragan Bogetić, *Beogradska konferencija nesvrstanih zemalja*, Zavod za udžbenike, Beograd, 2013, pp. 15–30.

⁶ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Jugoslavija i hladni rat*, Arhipelag, Beograd, 2013, pp. 123–130; Tvrtko Jakovina, *Treća strana hladnog rata*, Fraktura, Zagreb, 2011, pp. 23–40; Branko Petranović, *Istorija socijalističke Jugoslavije*, Radnička štampa, Beograd, 1977, pp. 50–66.

⁷ Jan Arne Westad, *Globalni hladni rat*, Arhipelag, Beograd, 2008, pp. 101–145; Leo Mates, *Počelo je u Beogradu*, Globus, Zagreb, 1982, pp. 17–40; Eric Hobsbawm, *Doba ekstrema*, Dereta, Beograd, 2002, pp. 262–282.

⁸ Nesvrstani Vučković, *Nesvrstani u podeljenom svetu*, Rad, Beograd, 1981, pp. 12–39; Leo Mates, *Nesvrstanost, Teorija i savremena praksa*, Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 1970, pp. 51–70.

⁹ Jadranka Jovanović, *Jugoslavija i Savet Bezbednosti Organizacije Ujedinjenih Nacija*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Beograd, 1990, str. 10–35.

¹⁰ Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics”, *International Security* 20(1): 1995, 71–81.

¹¹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization* 46(2): 1992, pp. 391–425; Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State”, *American Political Science Review*, 88(2): 1994, 384–396.

¹² Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

¹³ Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics”, *International Security* 20(1): 1995, 71–81.

¹⁴ Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics”, *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3): 1997, 319–363.

¹⁵ Ted Hopf, “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory”, *International Security*, 23(1): 1998, 171–200.

¹⁶ Stefano Guzzini, *A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations*, *European Journal of International Relations*, 6(2): 2000, 147–182.

¹⁷ Martha Finnemore, Kathryn Sikkink, “Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4(1): 2001, 391–416.

¹⁸ Martha Finnemore, Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”,

International Organization, 5(4): 1998, 887-917

¹⁹ Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory", *World Politics*, 50(2): 1998, 324-348

²⁰ Nicholas G. Onuf, "The Constitution of International Society", *European Journal of International Law*, 5(1): 1994, 1-19.

²¹ Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the UN Security Council", *Global Governance*, 8(1): 2002, 35-51

²² John Gerard Ruggie, "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution", *International Organization*, 46(3): 1992, 561-598

²³ Erik Voeten, "The Political Origins of the UN Security Council's Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force", *International Organization*, 59(3): 2005, 527-557

²⁴ Jennifer Milliken, "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods", *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(2): 1999, 225-240

²⁵ United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, document A/PV.1850, available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/A/PV.1850>. Accessed 8.2.2026.

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, document A/PV.1861, available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.1861. Accessed 8.2.2026; United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, document A/PV.1875, available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.1875. Accessed 8.2.2026.

²⁷ United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, document A/PV.1951, available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.1951. Accessed 8.2.2026.

²⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Official Records, document A/PV.2052, available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.2052. Accessed 8.2.2026.

²⁹ General Assembly, 1973. Official Records, document A/PV.2080. Available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.2080. Accessed 8.2.2026.

³⁰ General Assembly, 1973. Official Records, document A/PV.2117. Available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.2117. Accessed 8.2.2026.

³¹ General Assembly, 1973. Official Records, document A/PV.2160. Available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.2160. Accessed 8.2.2026; General Assembly, 1973. Official Records, document A/PV.2172. Available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.2172. Accessed 8.2.2026; General Assembly, 1973. Official Records, document A/PV.2178. Available at: docs.un.org/en/A/PV.2178. Accessed 8.2.2026.

³² Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1590*, 1972.

³³ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1638*, 1972; Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1640*, 1972.

³⁴ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1663*, 1973.

³⁵ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1687*, 1973.

³⁶ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1756*, 1973.

³⁷ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1684*, 1973.

³⁸ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1686*, 1973.

³⁹ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1699*, 1973.

⁴⁰ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1643*, 1972.

⁴¹ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1644*, 1972.

⁴² Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1650*, 1972.

⁴³ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1651*, 1972.

⁴⁴ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1653*, 1972.

- ⁴⁵ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1706*, 1973.
- ⁴⁶ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1722*, 19 73.
- ⁴⁷ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1734*, 1973.
- ⁴⁸ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1744*, 1973.
- ⁴⁹ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1748*, 1973.
- ⁵⁰ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1749*, 1973.
- ⁵¹ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1750*, 1973.
- ⁵² Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1752*, 1973.
- ⁵³ Security Council, *Official Records, document S/PV.1760*, 1973.

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