Paul Stubbs

Of War and Peace

Socialist Yugoslavia, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Resolution of Conflicts

Abstract
This article, based on archival sources and secondary literature, explores the role of socialist Yugoslavia in the context of its leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and its contributions to peace and conflict resolution at diverse scales. It explores this, primarily, in relation to the Cold War, as well as NAM's response to major geopolitical conflicts, notably the Vietnam War and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The dynamics of Yugoslav and NAM support for decolonial liberation struggles, as a form of support for "just wars", is also discussed. The significance of NAM's role in advocating "general and complete disarmament" and the important role that Yugoslavia played in the Helsinki process in the mid- to late-1970s, seeking security and co-operation in Europe, are also addressed. The argument is that, whilst socialist Yugoslavia no longer exists, and NAM is not the force it once was; the principles of NAM remain as relevant as ever.

Keywords: Socialist Yugoslavia, Non-Aligned Movement, peace, disarmament, Liberation Movements

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Povzetek

O vojni in miru: socialistična Jugoslavija, Gibanje neuvrščenih in razrešitev konfliktov

Prispevek, ki temelji tako na arhivskih virih kot sekundarni literaturi, raziskuje vlogo socialistične Jugoslavije v kontekstu njenega vodilnega položaja v Gibanju neuvrščenih ter njen prispevek k miru in reševanju konfliktov na različnih ravneh. Razprava se osredotoča predvsem na hladno vojno ter na odzive Gibanja neuvrščenih na ključne geopolitične konflikte, zlasti vietnamsko vojno in sovjetsko invazijo na Afganistan. Obravnava tudi dinamiko jugoslovanske in neuvrščene podpore dekolonialnim osvobodilnim bojem kot obliki podpore »pravičnim vojnam«. Članek se ukvarja tudi s pomenom vloge Gibanja neuvrščenih pri zagovarjanju »splošne in popolne razorožitve« ter pomembne vloge, ki jo je Jugoslavija imela v helsinškem procesu sredi in v drugi polovici sedemdesetih let, katerega cilj je bil zagotoviti varnost in sodelovanje v Evropi. Osrednja teza članka je, da kljub temu, da socialistična Jugoslavija ne obstaja več in da Gibanje neuvrščenih nima več nekdanjega vpliva, načela Gibanja neuvrščenih ostajajo enako aktualna kot nekoč.

Ključne besede: socialistična Jugoslavija, Gibanje neuvrščenih, mir, razorožitev, osvobodilna gibanja

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Introduction

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), in which socialist Yugoslavia played a leading role, pursued an active politics that rejected the division of the world into two blocs, the US-led West and the Soviet-led East. In the 1970s in particular, it was also concerned with global inequalities between the wealthy North and the impoverished South. Many countries that were then termed the "developing" or "Third World" had emerged from the shadow of colonial rule, only to face neocolonial exploitation within a global capitalist system dominated by large Western multinational corporations. NAM explicitly linked these two geopolitical divi-

sions, challenging forms of political, economic, and cultural violence, and positioning itself as an agent of peace in global and regional conflicts. At the same time, both socialist Yugoslavia and NAM offered support, including military support through training, equipment, and weapons, to Third World liberation movements fighting against colonial rule. This support included military aid in the form of training, equipment, and weapons. It began with support for the Algerian liberation struggle and continued into the 1980s with support for the struggle against apartheid and for the Palestinian people's right to a homeland.

Even beyond the apparent contradiction of supporting peace while arming liberation movements, the role of socialist Yugoslavia within the NAM varied over time. In contrast to Cuba, another founding member of NAM that was closer to the Soviet Union at times, Yugoslavia often pursued cautious, even rather conservative, policies. It explicitly sought to "deideologise" NAM based on a criticism of what it saw as "pseudo-radical" stances.[1] As the economic and political crisis unfolded across Yugoslavia in the 1980s, socialist and decolonial solidarity seemed to be pushed to the margins in the quest for hard currency, which included selling arms to anyone willing to buy them, regardless of how they would be used. Indeed, Yugoslavia sold arms to NAM member states even during violent right-wing changes of government, most notably in Indonesia when Suharto came to power in 1968.

Arguably, the more principled origins of the NAM lie in Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's adaption of Gandhi's commitment to non-violence. This commitment was enshrined in the agreement between China and India known as the Panchsheel Principles, which are based on mutual respect for sovereignty and peaceful coexistence. After breaking with Stalin and being expelled from the Cominform in 1948, Yugoslavia saw the NAM as a bulwark against the threat of a Soviet invasion. It was a kind of "moral force", in contrast to the military force of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. This helped Yugoslavia overcome its isolation and solidify its own security, as well as that of other small and seemingly weak states within the world system.

In this text, I explore some of the contradictions of Yugoslavia's socialist role within the NAM through the lens of war and peace. I use a conjunctural frame to address globally connected historical processes, as well as NAM's counter-hegemonic potential and its limits. Firstly, I focus on NAM in relation to the Cold War and its response to major geopolitical conflicts, such as the Vietnam War

1 Paul Stubbs, "Introduction: Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations", in *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries*, ed. Paul Stubbs (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), 3–33.

and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. I also examine how NAM sought to address conflicts within or between some of its member states. I then turn to the dynamics of Yugoslav and NAM support for decolonial liberation struggles. The third section addresses the idea of a "peace dividend", both in terms of advocating for "general and complete disarmament" and the important role that Yugoslavia played in the Helsinki process of the mid- to late 1970s, which sought to promote security and cooperation in Europe. In the concluding section, I reiterate some lessons the NAM may offer for the contemporary moment, as well as the possibilities for a renewed, principled, left-wing decolonial internationalism. Throughout, I draw on material from the Yugoslav archives, as well as secondary sources, including literature reflecting on and from the period itself.

Cold War and Hot Wars

At the preparatory meeting for the Belgrade Conference, the first summit of the non-aligned, held in Cairo on 5 June 1961, a set of criteria for invitations was set out. In addition to insisting on an independent policy and supporting National Liberation Movements, the criteria included not being a member of a multilateral military alliance, not having a bilateral military agreement with a Great Power, not being part of a regional defence pact in the context of Great Power conflicts, and not having foreign military bases on one's territory. The preparatory meeting for the Belgrade Conference, which was to be the first summit of the non-aligned, held in Cairo on 5 June 1961, set out a set of criteria for invitations which, in addition to insisting on an independent policy and supporting National Liberation Movements, included not being a member of a multilateral military alliance, not having a bilateral military agreement with a Great Power, not being part of a regional defence pact in the context of Great Power conflicts, and not having military bases of a foreign power on one's territory. Even these criteria were somewhat flexible—consider Cuba and Cyprus, for example—with the emphasis being on countries demonstrating "a trend in favour" of true non-alignment.[2] In addition to the calls for disarmament that will be discussed later, from its inception NAM sought to act as a kind of "soft power", urging the superpowers to reduce global tensions. The Belgrade Conference communiqué noted that international tensions were high and that world peace was "seriously

2 Bojana Tadić and Miloš Dromnjak, *1956–1989 Documents of the Gatherings of the Non-Aligned Countries*, vol. 1 (Belgrade: Međunarodna Politika, 1989), 14.

threatened".[3] Calls for negotiations rather than a standoff between the two blocs became a performative ritual at NAM summits, often accompanied by a no less significant gestural politics, as in the decision after the Belgrade summit to hand deliver an appeal for peace and an identical letter to both US President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Krushchev taken to Washington personally by Sukarno and Modibo Keita, the President of Mali , and to Moscow by Nehru and Nkrumah.[4]

At the same time, NAM often had to decide, in the midst of conflicts, as to who the legitimate representatives of particular Member States were. Considerable discussion surrounded the participation of the Congo at the Belgrade summit, with Tito ultimately insisting on inviting the allies of the assassinated Patrice Lumumba, backed by other NAM leaders.[5] A minute's silence was held at the start of the summit in memory of Lumumba. The issue of the civil war in the Congo was discussed at both the Belgrade and Cairo (1964) summits. The latter emphasised the importance of the Organisation of African Unity in restoring peace.[6] The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 brought the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe, ultimately raising awareness in both the United States and the Soviet Union of the dangers of entering into a nuclear war by accident.

As the two superpower blocs established more stable relations, they competed for influence in the Global South. The rise of China as an independent force was an additional factor, and NAM itself was plagued by internal conflicts. Although it was relatively powerless to intervene in the border dispute between China and India—itself a significant obstacle to any further Afro-Asian conferences—NAM increasingly worked behind the scenes to limit military action, seek peaceful resolutions to conflicts, and urge warring factions not to turn to one of the superpowers for aid. By the time of the Cairo summit in September 1964, clear differences had already emerged within NAM between a more "radical" faction led by Indonesia and a more "moderate" faction led by Yugoslavia. Indonesia's president Sukarno emphasised "new emerging forces" and saw superpower rapprochement as little more than a subterfuge for deepening neo-colonialism. He believed that newly decolonised states needed to adopt a far more assertive role in international relations. Tito, on the other hand, feared that this radicalisation would increase rather than reduce global tensions. Although never abandoning NAM, in January 1965, Sukarno took Indonesia out of the UN,

3 Tadić and Dromnjak, 15.

4 Jurgen Dinkel, *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization, and Politics (1927–1992)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 102–3.

5 Jovan Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 59.

6 Tadić and Dromnjak, *1956–1989 Documents*, 25.

explicitly urging Third World forces to use all means, not just peaceful ones, to overcome the forces of imperialism.[7]

More than a decade apart, the United States' involvement in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan were, in different ways, key tests for NAM and for socialist Yugoslavia. The intensification of US involvement in Vietnam in 1965 – including aerial bombardment and atrocities on the ground – in what became known as "the first live televised war" – sparked outrage around the world. Since breaking with Stalin, Tito's Yugoslavia had been dependent on US support. Initially, it sought to act as a peace mediator by convening a meeting of non-aligned countries in Belgrade on 15 March 1965. Despite the anti-US rhetoric, the meeting eventually issued a statement signed by 17 countries that vaguely condemned all foreign involvement.[8] However, Cuba and Mali withdrew their support when a section explicitly condemning US aggression was removed.[9] The Yugoslav political leadership sought to balance support for the Vietnamese liberation struggle, their reputation in NAM, and their relations with the United States. Between 1966 and 1968, a series of demonstrations across Yugoslavia escalated beyond what the regime deemed to be "responsible anti-Americanism".[10] Attacks on US consulates and embassies were often violently suppressed by the police, and some leaders of the student movement and dissident intellectuals were arrested and charged with inciting violent protests. In many ways, the protests linked a more radical anti-imperialism with a concern that the Yugoslav revolution had, itself, atrophied and descended into a form of bureaucratic managerialism. In short, protests against the Vietnam War gave rise to a more radical Yugoslav student movement influenced by a new Western counterculture, which demanded change at home, particularly during the student protests of 1968.

The Vietnam War was also significant in terms of what could be termed "quotidian non-alignment", with acts of solidarity taking place in schools and factories across Yugoslavia. These included blood donations, awareness weeks, and workers contributing 2% of their wages towards a "Vietnam Fund".[11] However, these events became less significant by the mid-1970s, despite 'Solidarity Weeks'

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7 Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits*, 88.

8 Sabine Rutar and Radina Vučetić, "The Engineering of Political Equidistance and Its Consequences: The Vietnam War and Popular Protest in Yugoslavia", in *Protest in the Vietnam War Era*, ed. Alexander Sedlmaier (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2022), 144.

9 Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits*, 91.

10 James Mark et al., "'We Are with You, Vietnam': Transnational Solidarities in Socialist Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia", *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no. 3 (2015): 452.

11 Čarna Brković, *Realigning Humanitarianism in the Balkans: From Cold War Politics to Neoliberal Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2026, forthcoming).

– a key part of what has been termed Yugoslavia's "humanitarian internationalism" – continuing until 1987.[12] From the 1970 summit in Lusaka onwards, NAM accepted the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam as observers, whilst consistently supporting "the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people to freedom, peace and independence".[13] However, NAM never managed to translate rhetoric into action.

Just over two months after the Havana NAM summit, at which Cuba was elected to chair the movement for the next three years, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a NAM member state, in late December 1979, signalled the onset of a new Cold War and inflicted irreparable damage to NAM unity.[14] In January 1980, a United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning the Soviet invasion was supported by 57 NAM states, opposed by nine, with 24 abstaining. NAM's traditional approach of moving internal conflicts off the formal agenda could no longer be maintained, and there were even calls for Cuba's expulsion from the NAM, given the extent of its support for the Soviet intervention. Following Tito's death in May 1980, Indira Gandhi sought to assume his role as the moral leader of non-alignment. The Yugoslavs themselves began to distinguish between a non-aligned policy, to be maintained at all costs, and the NAM, which was increasingly seen as more trouble than it was worth.

As Jovan Čavoški has argued, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, in early 1979, and the Iran–Iraq War, which began in September 1980, changed the dynamics of the Cold War, further fracturing the NAM. Crucially, they also added an Islamic–secular divide to the existing East–West and North–South divisions. In short, the NAM's principles of self-determination, non-interference, and sovereignty began to be "coated in traditionalist and non-secular forms".[15] The bitter eight-year war between the two NAM member states, Iran and Iraq, along with criticism of the Cuban leadership and calls for the expulsion of Egypt following its rapprochement with Israel, absorbed so much of the NAM's energy that consensus amongst the member states became impossible to maintain beyond a meaningless lowest common denominator. Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi used his 75-minute speech at the 1986 NAM summit in Harare to remind his audience that he had already threatened to critique NAM at the New Delhi summit three years earlier. He began "now the time has come", naming "traitors and spies who recognise Israel" as unfit to sit with a revolutionary such as himself, questioning NAM's

12 Dora Tot, "State-Sponsored 'Solidarity Weeks' (1967–1987): The Home Front of Yugoslav Humanitarian Internationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History* (2025).

13 Tadić and Dromnjak, *1956–1989 Documents of the Gatherings*, 29.

14 Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits*, 193.

15 Čavoški, 231.

neutrality and, dividing the world into two camps – "one for liberation and the other for imperialism" – called NAM a farce and advocated, instead, for a revolutionary armed struggle.[16] Three years later, despite his threats, Qaddafi attended the 1989 Belgrade summit, the last before the wars that would divide Yugoslavia. Once again, the NAM was unable to do anything beyond suspending Yugoslavia's membership of the movement that it had done the most to bring into being.

Assessing the extent to which the NAM contributed to a safer world between 1961 and 1989 would require a kind of counterfactual history of what the world might have looked like without the NAM. This would probably be a rather fruitless and speculative exercise. Although it operated more at the level of rhetoric, NAM's "soft power" and "moral politics" did impact the behaviour of the two superpower blocs to varying degrees and in different ways at different times. The very existence of NAM suggested an alternative to bloc-based division. When Tito made his somewhat premature comment at the Lusaka NAM summit that "half of the UN is here",[17] an achievement realised three years later in Algiers, he was suggesting that NAM states could not easily be ignored when they acted collectively. Arguably, the role of the NAM within the UN system, international law, and disarmament was crucial in avoiding nuclear war and curbing an apparently unstoppable arms race. We will return to this, as well as to security and cooperation in Europe, later. Equally important, however, was the support offered by the NAM and its member states to decolonisation movements. As discussed in the next section, this support often went far beyond mere rhetoric.

Decolonial Liberation Struggles

Between 1961 and 1989, the NAM and socialist Yugoslavia offered tangible, material support to liberation movements in the Global South fighting to rid themselves of colonial rule. This support came in many forms, including humanitarian aid and various kinds of military support, such as training, equipment, and weaponry. Of course, NAM was not alone in offering this support; the Soviet Union, states within the Soviet bloc, Cuba, and China were also heavily involved in many of the same struggles. Although it was never stated explicitly, the NAM viewed armed liberation struggles as essentially "just wars", as opposed to the

16 Col. Muamar Qaddafi, "A Critique of the Non-Aligned Movement", *The Black Scholar* 18, no. 2 (1987): 40–47.

17 Archives of Yugoslavia, Lusaka Non-Aligned Summit, Box KPR I-4-a-9, 1970.

interference in internal affairs, including military intervention, by members of one of the two superpower blocs.

The struggle for Algerian independence from French rule, which took place roughly between 1954 and 1962, played a key role in the broader decolonial struggle and helped to establish the reputation of socialist Yugoslavia as an important ally of that struggle. Yugoslavia matched words with deeds, building her reputation as a key supporter of decolonisation, cementing her role in establishing and, for some time, effectibely leading, the NAM.[18] The Yugoslavs offered significant and consistent support based on the understanding that the struggle for Algerian independence was a battle between right and wrong. They recognised the National Liberation Front (FLN) as the sole legitimate liberation movement fighting against French colonialism. The Yugoslavs also saw Algeria as 'a bridge to Africa', and, although China and Cuba were also involved, the FLN leadership considered Yugoslav support to be second only in importance to that of neighbouring Arab states.[19]

Although, like India, Yugoslavia was initially cautious about recognising the FLN, it accepted them as the Provisional Government of Algeria at the preparatory meeting for the Belgrade summit held in Cairo in June 1961. The Belgrade summit communique not only reinforced the importance of Algeria's freedom, self-determination and independence but, also, the need for territorial integrity including the Sahara.[20] As Mila Turajlić has documented, Yugoslavia's "aid without strings" policy involved embedding Stevan Labudović, a documentary filmmaker who had chronicled Tito's travels in the Global South, with the FLN's military wing. This gave him unprecedented access to battlefields and enabled him to create documentary films and train Algerian filmmakers.[21] The FLN saw parallels between their own struggle and that of the Yugoslav Partisans during the Second World War. Indeed, in the early years of Algerian independence, until Ben Bella was overthrown by Boumédiène, Yugoslav self-management was referenced as a relevant model. However, there was also a pro-Maoist faction within the leadership.[22]

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18 Stubbs, "Introduction".

19 Jeffrey James Byrne, "Beyond Continents, Colours, and the Cold War: Yugoslavia, Algeria, and the Struggle for Non-Alignment", *The International History Review* 37, no. 5 (2015): 922.

20 Tadić and Dromnjak, *1956–1989 Documents of the Gatherings*, 17.

21 Mila Turajlić, "Filmske Novosti: Filmed Diplomacy", *Nationalities Papers* 49 no. 3 (2021): 485.

22 Jovan Čavoški, "Between Revolution and Non-Alignment: The Sino-Yugoslav Competition in Algeria and the Global Cold War", in *China, Yugoslavia, and Socialist Worldmaking: Convergences and Divergences*, ed. Zvonimir Stopić et al. (Koper: ZRS, 2023), 265–92.

Having established its reputation in the 1960s, particularly in the 1970s, Yugoslavia became somewhat more risk-averse in its support for liberation movements. It rarely acted unilaterally, instead preferring to sound out the views of NAM states closer to the conflict. However, there was unequivocal support for liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique, for the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, and for the defeat of apartheid in South Africa, Namibia (then South West Africa), and Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) at both NAM summits and in joint resolutions at the United Nations. Despite these struggles spanning very different spaces, times, and modalities, there are some striking continuities between them, particularly in the Yugoslav response. Sooner or later, the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974 led to independence for former Portuguese colonies. Struggles against apartheid and those of the Palestinians then dominated Yugoslav and NAM diplomacy for at least a decade.

As mentioned previously, Yugoslavia and other NAM states were not the only supporters of decolonisation movements, nor were they always the most significant. Arguably, the Soviet Union's support for the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa[23]—including hosting ANC troops and direct military involvement at times—and the Cuban presence in Angola, in both supporting independence and taking part in the ensuing civil war, were much more significant in terms of their nature and scale. In addition, the Yugoslavs often struggled to decide which faction to support due to their lack of direct on-the-ground presence and up-to-date intelligence. They also found it difficult to trust factions that claimed victory was imminent. In South Africa, for example, Yugoslavia supported both the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-African Congress (PAC), providing scholarships to students nominated by each organisation to study in Yugoslavia from the early 1960s onwards. For a considerable period, the Yugoslavs favoured the PAC, even in the face of strong evidence that the ANC was playing a more significant role. This was partly due to the perception that the ANC had supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 through its links with the Communist Party of South Africa.[24]

Yugoslavia had strong links with the SWAPO leadership in Namibia dating back to 1959. Its exiled leader, Sam Nujoma, frequently visited Yugoslavia, including attending the Belgrade Summit in 1961. While juggling support from Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and the German Democratic Republic (DDR), the Yugoslav archives contain many negative assessments by senior Yugoslav dip-

23 Ronnie Kasrils, ed., *International Brigade Against Apartheid: Secrets of the War that Liberated South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2021).

24 Archives of Yugoslavia, South Africa Collection, Box F-I-558, 1969.

lomats of Nujoma's capabilities as a guerrilla leader. Many of his requests for money and equipment, as well as for the opening of an SWAPO information centre in Belgrade, were either turned down or met only partially.[25] Nevertheless, in 1977, when independence seemed within reach, SWAPO turned to the Yugoslavs to draft a constitution. This task was ultimately given to Professor Aleksander Fira, who taught at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Belgrade.[26]

Yugoslav diplomacy initially supported the State of Israel. However, from the mid-1950s onwards, it shifted decisively in the context of Tito's close links with Nasser, its evolving decolonial position, and events on the ground. This culminated in the cutting of formal diplomatic relations with Israel after the Six-Day War of 1967.[27] Although direct support was limited, Yugoslavia's recognition of the PLO as the legitimate Palestinian umbrella organisation led to its inclusion in NAM summits and the Arab League. Indeed, Yugoslavia strengthened its support for the PLO by rejecting the Jordanian peace plan in the early 1970s. Although it did not support Egypt's expulsion from the NAM as other states did, Yugoslavia was extremely lukewarm regarding Egypt's rapprochement with Israel. During Yasser Arafat's third visit to Yugoslavia in March 1972, he met with Tito, as well as over 500 Palestinian students, and visited the recently opened PLO Information Centre in Belgrade.[28] Over time, NAM resolutions at their own summits and within the UN became more political and less exclusively humanitarian. At the 1973 Algiers summit, the communiqué referred to the "systematic uprooting of the Palestinian people from their homeland" by Zionist settler colonialists, equating the Palestinian struggle with the situation in South Africa and condemning the use of similar methods by different "racist and segregationist minorities".[29]

By the end of the 1970s and, more definitively, throughout the 1980s, the growing economic crisis in Yugoslavia meant that ideological considerations in terms of support for decolonial liberation movements were less important than trade deals, including arms deals, with any country or group that provided payment in dollars or, in some cases, needed commodities. An internal Yugoslav report from 1979 shows that support for four key liberation movements, the ANC, SWAPO, ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, and the PLO, totalled around 20 million dinars,

25 Archives of Yugoslavia, Lusaka Non-Aligned Summit, Box KPR I-4-a-9, 1970.

26 Archives of Yugoslavia, Namibia Collection, Box F-I-164, 1977.

27 Ante Batović, "Non-Aligned Yugoslavia and the Relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation", paper presented at the 11th Mediterranean Research Meeting at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy, 24–27 March, 2010, https://doi.org/10.7916/D8W66SG7.

28 Archives of Yugoslavia, PLO Collection, Box KPR I-1-925-940, 1972.

29 Tadić and Dromnjak, *1956–1989 Documents of the Gatherings*, 95.

or about $1.1m.[30] In the context of respecting sovereignty and not interfering in the internal affairs of other NAM member states, as noted above, the Yugoslavs had, much earlier, accepted Indonesia's continued membership of the NAM after the right-wing coup that deposed Sukarno. They also maintained trade deals with the new Suharto regime, including arms sales that were likely to be used against the Indonesian population. While there were clear contradictions in Yugoslavia's stance, providing diplomatic and material support to liberation movements was an essential part of Yugoslavia's commitment to non-alignment.

A Peace Dividend? Disarmament and Security in Europe

Arguably, NAM's most significant contribution to global peace has been its role as a norm entrepreneur in relation to nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Broadly speaking, norm entrepreneurs are international relations agencies that challenge the status quo and promote new rules. The Brioni Declaration, which followed the meeting of Tito, Nehru and Nasser in July 1956, already placed an emphasis on limiting the spread of nuclear and conventional weapons, as well as on securing and monitoring binding treaties.[31] Perhaps chastened by the Soviet Union's decision to carry out a nuclear test to coincide with the Belgrade summit of 1961, the NAM states also called for a ban on nuclear testing. Later, they warned of the threat posed by biological and chemical weapons. The phrase "general and complete disarmament", first used at the Cairo preparatory summit in June 1961, became a guiding principle of the NAM. The aim was to eliminate the threat of nuclear annihilation, stop the increasingly costly arms race, and free up resources for human welfare and well-being. At the same time, NAM summits consistently backed the peaceful use of nuclear technology and the importance of states in the Global South having access to such technology, presenting it as a form of catch-up modernisation. However, they remained silent on the apparent dangers of peaceful use spilling over into military use.

Although NAM itself was not a major force in global politics, non-aligned and neutral countries had played a crucial role in negotiating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the time it was opened for signature in 1968. By the time the treaty entered into force on 5 March 1970, NAM had become an im-

30 Archives of Yugoslavia. PLO Collection, Box KPR I-1-925-940, 1979.

31 Tadić and Dromnjak, *1956–1989 Documents of the Gatherings*, 9.

portant voice calling for rigorous monitoring to ensure that nuclear states fulfilled their obligations. India's successful nuclear weapons test in May 1974 was described as a "peaceful nuclear explosion". It was the first confirmed test by a country outside the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Notably, two of these members, China and France, were not signatories to the NPT. This event had huge implications for the NAM and for the socialist state of Yugoslavia. India had secretly planned a nuclear weapons programme in response to tensions with China, a recognised nuclear power, and Pakistan, which was likely to become one in the near future. Having abandoned its nuclear ambitions in the early 1960s for both pragmatic and idealistic reasons, Yugoslavia was keen to demonstrate its support for the NPT.[32] However, less than a month later, it began a secret nuclear weapons programme linked to an increased focus on nuclear power.[33] While publicly supportive of continued disarmament, Yugoslavia also joined NAM states in arguing that more nations would enter the nuclear arms race unless existing nuclear powers disarmed.

In line with its commitment to non-alignment and global peace, Yugoslavia played a pivotal role in the Helsinki Process. It participated in the 1975 Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed the Helsinki Declaration on 1 August 1975, and hosted the first Helsinki Review Meeting in Belgrade between 4 October 1977 and 9 March 1978. Despite disagreements among the 35 participating countries, the meeting maintained the momentum of regular follow-up meetings. It is important not to view Yugoslavia's commitment to the CSCE as an abandonment of non-alignment. Instead, Yugoslavia incorporated elements of the NAM's *modus operandi* into the process. Indeed, it was one of the few countries to link the process to the need for Western European states to come to terms with their colonial pasts, or, in the case of France, with its continued colonial rule. Yugoslavia collaborated closely with European neutral states, and as Tvrtko Jakovina has noted, even as the country began to disintegrate in the late 1980s, Yugoslav diplomats pursued a "modern" and "rational" foreign policy, striking a balance between pragmatism and idealism.[34] However, by the time NAM returned to Belgrade in 1989, the country was in turmoil. Combined with the fall of the Berlin Wall, this meant that NAM had lost much of its *raison d'être*, not to mention one of its core founding members.

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32 Marko Miljković, "Tito's Proliferation Puzzle: The Yugoslav Nuclear Program 1948–1970" (doctoral dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2021).

33 William C. Potter et al., "Tito's Nuclear Legacy", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 56, no. 2 (2000): 63–70.

34 Tvrtko Jakovina, "'Not Like a Modern Day Jesus Christ': Pragmatism and Idealism in Yugoslav Non-Alignment", in *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement*, 122.

Conclusion: NAM Afterlives

In the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli state in Gaza, the principles of the NAM remain as relevant as ever. Indeed, when it comes to monitoring disarmament treaties at the UN, some argue that the NAM states remain an important counterbalance to a global arms race.[35] The principles of self-determination, non-interference in neighbouring states, and peaceful coexistence are under threat as powerful states act on their own self-interest under the guise of a "responsibility to protect".[36] The reaction of many NAM member states in the Global South was to view the Russian invasion as just one breach of the rules-based international order, rather than as something unique or exceptional, as some Western powers have sought to depict it. Therefore, abstaining from some UN resolutions shows the continued importance of upholding universal principles of peace, disarmament, and justice for all.[37] The rise of China and other BRICS countries as economic powers that rival the United States and the Global North and West is not yet reflected in the political sphere. While US military spending exceeds $800 billion annually — some three times that of China[38] — and the Trump administration is insisting that NATO's European members increase their defence spending to 5% of GDP, mainly through the purchase of US weaponry and the use of US contractors, active non-alignment is needed as a moral and material force in order to respond to the interlinked crises of war, climate change, and global inequality.

To provide a comprehensive overview of Yugoslavia's contributions to peace within the framework of its dedication to and pivotal role in the NAM, it is essential to address the tensions, contradictions, and evolving commitments that have emerged over time and across different regions. These tensions were manifested in the balance struck between idealism and pragmatism, radical stances and a more risk-averse, even conservative, position, and a sense of NAM as a partnership of equals and an implicit—and sometimes explicit—sense of developmental superiority. Nevertheless, compared to the foreign policy positions of the post-Yugoslav states, the moral politics of socialist Yugoslavia— its pursuit

35 William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, *Nuclear Politics and the Non-Aligned Movement: Principles vs Pragmatism* (London: Routledge and IISS, 2012).

36 Paul Stubbs and Srečko Pulig, "The Afterlives of Non-Alignment", Alienocene, 30 March 2022, https://alienocene.com/2022/03/30/the-afterlives-of-non-alignment/.

37 Jorge Heine et al., *The Non-Aligned World: Striking Out in an Era of Great Power Competition* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2025).

38 William Hartung, "America's Military-Industrial Complex is Ruining the World", *Jacobin*, 2 June 2022, https://jacobin.com/2022/02/us-pentagon-budget-military-spending-f-35-nuclear-weapons.

of global peace and disarmament, its support for a strengthened United Nations, and its backing of decolonial liberation struggles—provide a much-needed lesson in how to navigate today's multipolar world.

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