

British foreign policy and the balkans politics essay



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Upon completion of the First World War, four major post-war powers; Britain, France, USA and Italy laid the foundations of a new European and world geopolitical order on the peace conference in Versailles called the “ Treaty of Versailles”. The product was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Although legitimized by the idea of South Slav unity, establishing the Yugoslav state was just a cover for the realization of the “ Great Serbia”, which is a project corresponded with the strategic objectives of British policy in the area as it is now called “ Western Balkans” or, lately, “ Yugosphere”. In order to understand the Serbian and British strategic goals, it is necessary to explain the key elements of British strategy in this geopolitical space.

The geopolitical strategy of Great Britain was to maintain a balance of power in Europe. That is, the main aim of this strategy was to disable any continental European country to gain significant control over Continental Europe, as well as retain influence over the eastern Mediterranean, very strategically important Suez Canal and the “ pearl” of the British crown, India. It was therefore necessary to have several conflicting power centers in continental Europe with the proviso that either one cannot seriously threaten British interests. In this geopolitical game Great Britain appears as a kind of arbiter or neutralizer, so it was always on the opposite side from the country which is a (potential) threat to its interests. In this way Great Britain was ensured the balance of power.

Serbian strategic aim was to expand their territory on account of Croatia, Montenegro and parts of the then Ottoman Empire (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia), and to create a “ Greater Serbia”. During the history Serbs

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had Russia as allies in achieving these goals - whose strategic aim was to spread influence in the Balkans and - particularly since 1918. - Great Britain. As Serbia has no exit neither to the Aegean sea nor the Adriatic Sea, Russia has tried to achieve this goal by supporting Serbia in its ambition to acquire territorial expansion on account of the Croatian.

On the other hand, Croatia had Germans as its strategic partners. Germany had the same interests in the Balkans as Russia - Serbian allies, and the Serbia and Great Britain. In order to prevent the spread of influence of Germany in the Balkans and the Middle East, which are as important as the relationship with India and other colonial possessions, the United Kingdom - whose interests throughout history have been traditionally opposed German - turns to Serbia which wants to defeat German influence in the Balkans. If Serbia wants to compete with Germany, it must be the greatest military and economic force in the Balkans, must have access to the Adriatic Sea (rather than the Aegean, where they would threaten Britain's other allies, Greece), and control of Bosnia and Herzegovina. To do this, Serbia must control Croatia, which must be militarily and economically weak, and the easiest way to achieve this is in the common state. So arranged a joint Croatian-Serbian government will not fall under German influence.

2. 2. British pro-Yugoslav policy

Geopolitical symbiosis of Great Britain and Serbia was implemented with the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918.

Meanwhile, in Russia the Bolshevik Revolution stroke out, followed by a lengthy civil war and prolonged international isolation of the Soviet regime.

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These events weakened Russian influence in the Balkans but strengthened Britain's role which is evident even today.

Bearing in mind these geopolitical conflicts and entanglements, it is easier to understand the reasons for the establishment of the first Yugoslavia - the product of Versailles order, whom the UK was one of the main architects. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was a part of the security order directly under French domination (the so-called Little Entente), which corresponded to the aspirations of the British in the first post-war period. In later years, when the French security system showed its first cracks, especially after they came closer to Berlin and Rome, London intensively intervened in the turmoil in the Balkans and the Danube region. This can easily explain the persistent British insistence on the preservation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as well as the British silence on the appeals of Croatian politicians in Europe who were looking for support in the fight against Karađorđević dictatorship.

The newly created Yugoslav government was financially dependent on the British capital. A historian Hrvoje Matković writes about the Yugoslavia's financial dependency: " One of the most important positions of foreign capital in Yugoslavia was its share in the banking industry. Foreign capital covered three fifths of the shareholders equity. Of the 22 largest private bank (with the principal over 20 million dollars), foreign capital has played in 15 banks. Monopolistic groups of foreign capital, which were performed in Yugoslavia, despite the competitive struggle with each other, were connected system of participation by the world's largest banks. So they

created temporary alliances that had many common interests, so the onset of the Yugoslav state, more or less occupied common positions”[2]

Consequently it was quite logical that the Yugoslavian King Peter II. Karađorđević after the collapse of Yugoslavia – similar to other leaders of countries that have fallen under the control of the Axis- found refuge in London. As we know, the capital of Great Britain, as is known was the headquarters of the Yugoslav government’s refugee.

The period of Yugoslavia, in both, a Nazi monarch and socialist form, was a time of suppression for the Croatian national, cultural and religious identity, time of political deprivation, economic exploitation, police terror and bloody violence. For the first time in its long history, the Croatian Government was torn from their natural pro-Western cultural and civilization circle, and because of the British policy aims, forcibly placed on the Balkans. .

The continuity of the British pro-Yugoslav (and thus the pro-Serbian) policy continued in the Second World War. During the war, Yugoslav states confront three movements: the Ustasha movement with a program to create an independent Croatia (Leader: Dr. Ante Pavelic), Chetnik movement that fights for the preservation of monarchist Yugoslavia and Greater Serbian hegemony (leader: Draza Mihailovic) and the partisan movement fighting for the creation of communist Yugoslavia (Leader: Josip Broz Tito). United Kingdom announces the renewal of Yugoslavia as one of its war aims. Therefore, UK initially supported the Chetnik movement and at the same time considering possibilities for reforming Yugoslavia. This gave rise to the plan of a Balkan confederation, which in addition to Yugoslavia included

Greece and Bulgaria. On 15th January 1942 under pressure from the British an agreement was made between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Kingdom of Greece in London on the Balkan Union. But later, when the United Kingdom saw that the Chetniks have small chances for winning the war and that they jeopardize the plan on restoration of Yugoslavia, London opts Yugoslav partisan movement.

Help that UK gave partisan movement was very big and important. A British politician Julian Amery has no doubt about it: " The British cooperation with Tito through emissaries Deakin, and later through the delegation led by Fitzroy Maclean was a great lesson for Tito. Tito owed his victory to the British more than the Soviet material assistance. It is thanks to the British that the Yugoslav communist leadership managed to first isolate and then to eliminate the King Peter and refugee government, and to achieve international recognition." [3]

In this context it should be observed and the British role in Bleiburg massacre, when Britons gave the Yugoslav authorities NDH's disarmed surrendered troops, as well as numerous Croatian civilians, women, elderly and children in May 1945. Perhaps an excerpt from the recently published book, " Tito - a phenomenon of the century" by Pero Simic from Belgrade can through anecdote demonstrate us who are the „ best friends" real culprits of the Bleiburg massacre: " He is the only communist who has managed to captivate one of the world's biggest conservatives, the English Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who has recommended him not only to President Franklin Roosevelt, but also to the Soviet dictator Iosif

Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili (Stalin) ... When Churchill on one occasion told <https://assignbuster.com/british-foreign-policy-and-the-balkans-politics-essay/>

him: "Tito is one of my best friends," Kremljanin roguishly retorted: "I do not know him, but he must be good if you say so. I will meet him".

The relationship between Josip Broz Tito and the UK largely determined the foreign policy orientation of Yugoslavia. Though a communist country, Yugoslavia did not fall under Soviet dominion after the war but after the 1948th entered into a limited alliance with the West, which provided financial, military and other assistance. British historian and lecturer at the University of Sussex Peter Calvocoressi also notes: "Tito was a convinced communist, but not obedient. He was lucky that Yugoslavia does not border with the USSR and that he had the West to help. Yugoslavia became an international anomaly - a communist country, which depends on American and other Western aid, has Greece and Turkey as allies (Balkan pact in 1953), and then with Nehru and Nasser supporter of neutrality".[4]

American diplomat and geostrategist H. Kissinger says that Tito is the only communist leader in Eastern Europe who came to power primarily to its own merits. In 1948 he clearly announced that Belgrade would continue its own path independent of Moscow's directives. Stalin's revenge was the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform. Contrary to Stalin's predictions that Yugoslavia would soon break up, Tito survived especially with the help of Western democracies, which have temporarily forgotten their ideological rebuke his regime in order to establish a balance of power. Therefore, the assistance of the West can not bind to the so-called Marshall Plan. Other European countries also got substantial assistance for postwar reconstruction and for combating the spread of communism from the USSR.

How to Britain was important maintenance of unified Yugoslavia perhaps best tells us that the Croatian Spring 1971st caused great concern in the British Embassy in Belgrade, and in the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a letter to Bryan Sparrow, a former ambassador to Yugoslavia, and now the Chief of Department for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the Foreign Office Michael L. Tait from the British embassy in Yugoslavia, expressed concern that “ the demon of Croatian nationalism, which is summoned by Croatian politicians to strengthen their position in the negotiations on constitutional amendments, will not want back into the bottle.” For Yugoslavia to survive, Sparrow believes that all nations, and especially refers to the Serbs and Croats, have to show very great political tact and do not accept that their common interests to be overshadowed by nationalistic irrelevance, which is hard enough in many developed societies. The collapse of the Croatian Spring, of course, was greeted in Britain with great pleasure and enthusiasm.

British pro-Yugoslav policy continues through the nineties of the twentieth century, that is during the Fatherland war. Although the late eighties showed that Yugoslavia as unnatural, artificial creation and dungeons of all non-Serb peoples is unsustainable, Britain is firmly for maintaining Yugoslavia as a unitary state. It was the policy of the then European Community. Jacques Delors, a president of the European Commission from 1985 till 1994, in an interview with the Serbian member of the Presidency of the SFRY, Borisav Jovic, said the EU “ always” wanted to preserve Yugoslavia.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany were not greeted with excessive enthusiasm neither in the UK nor in the France.
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British author Chris Cviic and Peter Sanfey wrote: " The governments of Western countries and the United States were completely unprepared and not too happy with certain consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the results of the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Southeastern Europe.

British author Carole Hodge - renowned expert in Southeast Europe - writes: " A thorough analysis of events in Yugoslavia in the period immediately before the outbreak of war in 1991 shows that, while the country was falling into a deep economic, political and social crisis, Milosevic's position was constantly getting worse, even in Serbia itself but allies outside of Yugoslavia, particularly the United Kingdom helped rescue Milosevic and enabled him to strengthen his position and rein in the army and the main political and economic power structures. Thus, at the end 1991st he sat firmly in the saddle, from which he could spread the military action on the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina ".

The same British author describes the policy of Great Britain and the international community to Yugoslavia after the war: " The policy of the European Communities in Yugoslavia was primarily a result of the conflicting interests of member countries. But while most EU member states supported the introduction of a common European security system, the United Kingdom was a huge obstacle. French proposal to send the European force for separation to Yugoslavia was first put on the discussion at the end of July 1991. It got the strong support of most major European countries but Great Britain opposed this proposal. The Serbian troops occupied nearly a third of Croatian. British compliance with Belgrade became a major feature of British

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policy in the region, which largely influenced the shaping of international policy towards the Balkans. “ Support to Britain Serbia during the war is understandable given the fact that there was a strong lobby within Parliament, the strong seniority of its members, if not in number, who represented the Serbian point of view, in addition to the United Kingdom considered Serbia “ with its allies both world wars “, which again could be” beneficial to the UK in the new, yet undefined Europe, in the period after the Cold War. “

Bearing in mind that the Croatian citizens obnoxious any name with a prefix - “ South”, the integration begins to be done under the guise of Europeanization, democratization, liberalization, regional cooperation, human rights, reconciliation and good neighborly relations. It is important to mention that there is a small number of Brussels and European bureaucrats who had a benevolent attitude towards the former communist Yugoslavia.

The main operational body in carrying out regional Balkan integration and the institutional level is the RCC (Regional Cooperation Council - RCC) arising from the Stability Pact (Stability Pact - SP) for South Eastern Europe in 1999. The Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe was adopted at a special meeting of Foreign Ministers, representatives of international organizations, institutions and regional initiatives in Cologne 10th June 1999. Political confirmation was given during the summit in Sarajevo on 30 July 1999 and lived up operational maintenance of the Regional Table SP 16th September 1999.

The Pact is, therefore, adopted for the life of Dr. Franjo Tudjman, who said after the meeting in Sarajevo, said that “ Croatia gives active support of the Stability Pact, whose development has itself contributed to” and expressed confidence that “ all parties want to set pact Stability becomes an event of long-term historical significance. ” He added, however, that the “ unacceptable for Croatia, any concept of integration in some neojugoslavenske and similar boxes, because they have already proven their deleterious effects.” However, time will show how the adoption of the Stability Pact was one of Tudjman’s bad move, because although Tudjman strongly opposed to any re-integration of the Balkan Stability Pact will later degenerate main body responsible for Balkan integration – RCC.

The RCC was established based on the American Council on Foreign Relations (Council of Foreign Relations – CFR).

Council on Foreign Relations is an organization which the United States acts on behalf of British interests, and the organizational and ideological subsidiary of the British Royal Institute for International Affairs (Royal Institute for International Affairs – RIIA), founded in 30th svibnja 1919th, during the Versailles Peace Conference, with the purpose of coordination of Anglo-American strategic operations. Regional Cooperation Council established on 27 February 2008. in Sofia, where the meeting handover of power from the Stability Pact to the RCC. Instead of the SP Secretariat in Brussels, established by the RCC Secretariat based in Sarajevo, the secretary general of the region.

Politics updates Yugoslavia is particularly accelerated during the current global economic crisis. Glavnik Secretary RCC H. BiÅ;ÄeviÄ looking positively to the crisis because the crisis has started to " make the country on reciprocity."

But " business" (or " business opportunities" that the Jutarnji list in the article titled " Yugosphere has become a reality," 30 November 2009.), Only one of the instruments of the new South Slav integration that the U. S. is still taking place and semi- below the surface. Integration in addition to the economic area, carried out in the field of police and security systems. Ninth of December of that year, held the first joint demonstration of the border police Vukovar-Sirmium and Border Police Regional Centre Novi Sad, which, besides representatives from the Ministry of Interior and the Croatian Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, attended by British Deputy Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia, as well as a representative of the IOM, International Organization for Migration. The project, which is from 2. 6 million funded by the United Kingdom.

Conclusion

The Berlin wall fell more than two decades ago and so are foundations of almost half century Cold War between East and West. Instead of entering a new era of understanding between the people and developing economy of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe we witness the deterioration and depletion.

The Balkans is again the scene of strategic tension and warfare to foreign interests. The murder of the Habsburg Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo <https://assignbuster.com/british-foreign-policy-and-the-balkans-politics-essay/>

in 1914th year is in the most historical books presented as the work of a lone fanatic.. However, a careful research of Gavrilo Princip reveals his secret trip to London and Paris in the weeks before the killings that started the whole chain of events known as the First World War. The Balkans was a pawn in a much larger chess game of global power centers.

Similarly, in 1990 the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and French President Francois Mitterrand have joined forces in a desperate attempt to prevent the final unification of the two German states. Shortly thereafter, a barrel of gunpowder exploded in the Balkans and turned into a nearly continuous warfare.

Slowly emerge the terrible details of the robbery and plunder in the former Soviet Union that lasted more than a decade, committed by people who are usually called Russia's " oligarchs" with the help of incompetent policies of major international organizations. In a similar way in the European Union decisions on all major issues are made by small group of very powerful people who have the same interests – representatives of special interests of big banks and the giant multinational corporations, whether engaged in food, energy and industry.