RICE UNIVERSITY

YUGOSLAV-UNITED STATES RELATIONS, 1946-1947
STEMMING FROM THE SHOOTING OF U.S. PLANES
OVER YUGOSLAVIA, AUGUST 9 AND 19, 1946

by

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Abstract

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From 1945 to 1950, the era of the early cold war, most of the nations of the world were in one of two political groups: the pro-West headed by the United States, or the pro-East, headed by Soviet Union. One country which did not fall into this pattern, however, was Yugoslavia. She wanted to break completely with Moscow and to establish her own brand of national Communism, thus enabling her leaders to steer an individualist course in world affairs. Yugoslavia sought not only to free herself from Soviet domination but also to show her total opposition to the Western Allies, especially the United States. The latter part of this objective became a unique area of conflict in the cold war.

In 1945 Yugoslavia offered stiff opposition to Italian boundary settlements proposed by the Council of Foreign Ministers. Yugoslavia claimed the area of the Istrian peninsula, including the city of Trieste, as rightfully hers. While the diplomats discussed potential
settlements, Yugoslav and Allied troops coexisted uneasily on the peninsula. Tension between the U.S. and Yugoslavia rapidly reached a breaking point. Early in 1946 disputes between the two countries became more bitter. Tito claimed that scores of unauthorized Allied flights violated Yugoslav airspace daily. Although he protested, nothing was done. He retaliated by forcing the closing of commercial air service to American government representatives in Yugoslavia.

In August, 1946, the crisis was reached. The Yugoslavs forced down two U.S. aircraft over Yugoslavia within a space of ten days. The passengers and crew of the first plane were secretly interned by the Yugoslav government. The second plane and its crew were a total loss. The U.S. was outraged and sent an ultimatum to the Yugoslav government, demanding the release of the Americans in custody, U.S. access to the downed planes, and full investigation of the incidents. Before the 48-hour deadline was reached, the Yugoslavs had fulfilled all the requests. Each country blamed the other for the incidents, and each had its own accounts of the action. From that time the U.S. and the Yugoslav governments were in opposition until 1949.

Tito continued his anti-U.S. campaign, accusing U.S. Embassy employees of spying and then ordering the closing of the USIS reading room. The United States
likewise continued on its anti-Yugoslav course, spurred along by the realization of the fact that the nation to which it contributed 75% of UNRRA aid had, for no apparent reason, shot down two American craft and killed American crewmen. After much arguing, the issue was finally terminated, neither side gaining a clear victory.

The incidents were important for what each country had learned. Bipolarity, the Soviet-U.S. dominated framework for international relations, would have to be altered to accommodate third powers. This small incident in the cold war had brought three nations to the brink of hostilities and back to the reality that the uneasy peace of the post war world had to be maintained regardless of wounded national pride and prestige.
INTRODUCTION

The formation of foreign policy at any given time is an extremely delicate business. This is especially true if the country or government is new and its leadership inexperienced. If this young and insecure nation is then forced to attempt to make policy within the framework of a politically, militarily, and ideologically confused world situation dominated by the policies of two super powers, the result is apt to be disastrous. Such was the case of Tito's Yugoslavia in the period from 1945 to 1948.

Tito's problems in these years of establishment for his new communist republic of Yugoslavia were magnified many times over by the pressures from the outside world—mainly those from the U.S.S.R. and the United States—and the pressure which he exerted upon himself to form what he considered a truly nationalist communist state. In order to establish Yugoslavia as a member of the world community, he first had to define the role this nation should play vis-a-vis the great communist power, the U.S.S.R., and then Yugoslavia's position toward the great democratic power, the United States. This was the beginning
of trouble which would last until the Yugoslav break from Comintern in 1948, and until the resumption of friendly relations with the United States in 1949.

From mid-1945 through the end of 1946 Yugoslavia could formulate no long-range plans. Her policies—foreign and domestic—were dependent upon developments such as the post-war peace conferences and the Yugoslav struggle for control of the Istrian peninsula and the support or lack of it she received from the U.S.S.R. Far from desiring a lasting affiliation with the Soviet government, Yugoslavia instead sought independence and her own form of communism. She also wanted to show her contempt for the democratic powers of Great Britain and the United States in her own way. It was over this objective in 1946 that Yugoslav—United States relations were strained to the breaking point.

It shall be the purpose of this work to examine the way in which this novice government of Yugoslavia was influenced in her policy decisions and how and why she executed her policies against the U.S. as she did. The incidents of August, 1946—the shooting of U.S. planes over Yugoslav territory, August 9 and 19—were chosen as the focal point of this study because they, more clearly than any other events in Yugoslav-U.S. relations to that time, showed the way in which a minor infringement of one country's rights led to a conflict which went beyond the two nations basically involved and spread into the polarizing camps of the early cold war era.

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CHAPTER I
PRELUDE TO TROUBLE: THE COLD WAR, VENEZIA-GIULIA, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE RIFT

The wartime conferences to decide the fate of post-war Europe ranged in time from 1943 to 1945 and in place from Moscow to San Francisco. These meetings were the beginning of an era of transition from a military upheaval to a political one. In regard to eastern Europe, these agreements served little more purpose than to recognize what had been accomplished militarily. The U.S. had defeated the German forces in western Europe and held military possession of that area; the Soviet Union had defeated the Nazis in the East and held that territory. The logical conclusion to be drawn from this arrangement was that these powers would, at the end of hostilities, assume dominance in their respective areas of accomplishment. However, this situation changed radically with the development of new policies and ideologies by the U.S. and the Soviet Union concerning each other. Franklin Roosevelt had speculated that "in the postwar world there was either going to be some form of United States-Soviet cooperation or there was going to be dangerous instability." In place of the hoped-for cooperation
came fear and mutual distrust between these two super powers. The instability foreseen by Roosevelt ruled supreme in postwar international relations. Bipolarity and the first blasts of the long cold war had begun.

An unusual struggle took place within this framework of tension and insecurity. Forces of the Western Allies, Britain and the United States in particular, became the object of attack—military and political—of the newly formed Communist government of Yugoslavia. In 1945 Yugoslavia had come under the dominance of Josip Broz Tito and his Partisan-Communist guerilla forces. In a period of combined civil war and world war, the Yugoslavs had been caught up in a struggle for survival against the advances of the Nazis and one of reshuffling of political loyalties. After the Teheran Conference in 1943, Draža Mihailović, leader of the Četnici forces in Yugoslavia had refused to take specific action against the Nazis and thereby forced the British to throw their support to those in Yugoslavia who would fight the Germans—Tito and his followers. Soon the Americans, though not as whole-heartedly as the British, were also aiding the Partisans.

This aid was purely military for the British and Americans knew that Tito's government was Communist and certain to be Soviet-oriented. The problem with Yugoslavia as far as the Allies were concerned was merely the support of the strongest force there—the one force most likely
to assume the political power at the end of hostilities. Although this meant backing a Communist movement, the main objective that these Western powers sought for the Yugoslavs was a stable government. Tito seemed to be the one to provide that stability. It was probably with this fact in mind that Churchill made a "spheres of influence" agreement with Stalin at Moscow in October, 1944. He hoped that by British-Soviet sharing the dominance in Yugoslavia on a 50-50 basis, he could achieve a basis of harmony between Yugoslavia and the West in spite of her Communist government. Great Britain, along with the United States was soon to be disillusioned.

The first major instance of conflict between Yugoslavia and the West came over the issue of the Istrian Peninsula. The Partisan forces had worked to occupy this area and at the Jajce meeting of AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the Liberation of Yugoslavia), they had claimed the entire peninsula—the Italian state of Venezia Giulia and the city of Trieste. The Yugoslavs refused to have the matter settled by a peace conference and for a time it seemed that the outbreak of British-Yugoslav hostilities was certain. Finally relenting to Anglo-American pressure, the Partisan forces withdrew, leaving the British Eighth Army in charge.

As of 1943 Trieste had become an international issue. Three forces were fighting for control: the West,
represented by British and U.S. troops, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia. Conflict went on simultaneously among these three groups, with developments in each struggle spilling over into the others. The British and Americans angered the Yugoslavs by opposing the Partisan claims to Istria. The West wanted 1) to safeguard Trieste and 2) to protect the area from Soviet influence which they feared would come via Yugoslav domination. The Soviets in turn were displeased by this Yugoslav move so independent of Russian advice and counsel and the Yugoslavs were disturbed with the Soviet Union because they felt they were being "used as a bribe in international bargaining" and as a part of "a policy of sphere of influence." This struggle was significant for Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union because it marked the beginning of the Yugoslav-Soviet rift and the definite rise of Yugoslav nationalism. It was significant for the Western powers because it would bring about a situation so tense as to make the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Combined Chiefs of Staff think of resuming hostilities.

On June 9, 1945, an attempt was made to alleviate the tension of this situation. The Anglo-American-Yugoslav agreement was signed at Belgrade. By virtue of this the parties involved agreed to respect the provisional administration of Venezia Giulia—Anglo-American troops in one sector and Yugoslav troops in the other. The struggle
for Trieste continued on through the summer of 1945. "Yugoslav leaders [especially] Tito, threw themselves with characteristic vigour into the truculent attitudes of the cold war that had already started to develop between east and west. They cut themselves off from former western friends, and relations became very strained, especially with the United States." By September the Council of Foreign Ministers was meeting at London. Here Dr. Edvard Kardelj presented the Yugoslav territorial demands for Trieste. The issue was left unsolved and was carried over to the next meeting at the Paris Peace Conference in April, 1946.

The end of 1945 marked the establishment of the Tito government as the duly constituted leadership of Yugoslavia. Meeting on November 29, 1945, the Communist-pressured constituent Assembly 1) denounced the king, 2) declared a republic, and 3) adopted a new constitution (based upon the Soviet constitution), declaring itself the People's Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. The communist regime which had come to power had won by virtue of its own efforts and not because of help from the Soviets. This fact would be significant in the events to come. Just as 1945 was a year of prelude to trouble, 1946 proved to be the fulfillment of many of the anxieties of the previous year. By the beginning of the year, the Yugoslavs occupying their part
of Venezia Giulia (so-called Zone B) as well as other nationals within the Yugoslav borders were making a clear statement to the British and Americans occupying what the Yugoslavs considered to be their territory. The message was simple: get out.

In a speech entitled Yugoslavia's Foreign Policy, Tito outlined for the Yugoslav parliament in March, 1946 a brief history of Venezia Giulia and the reasons why the presence of the Allied Military Government there was so offensive. One of the foremost claims which Yugoslavia held on the area, according to Tito, was the population makeup. "Not only to politicians but to the whole world it is known that the areas demanded by Yugoslavia are inhabited in great majority by Croats and Slovenes, despite many years of denationalization and terror against the Slav population." He also pointed out that at the London Conference Yugoslavia had demanded division of the area along ethnic lines. Trieste was to have become a Federal Unit of the Yugoslav republic and the port was to have been internationalized. These demands though refused were, according to Tito, the desires of not only the Slavs of the area but also a large portion of the Italians.

Tito then launched a tirade against the AMG in Venezia Giulia, especially concerning events in Trieste and Gorizia. He stated that the Allies were subordinating
the will of the people to their own. He also charged that Fascists had infiltrated the area with the help of the AMG.

We have accurate data to show that in the last few days along, during the presence in Venezia Giulia of the Frontier Commission, either with the help or with the tacit approval of AMG, about 12 full trains and 70 lorries with Fascist bandits arrived in Trieste and Zone A from Italy.... They break into the dwellings of anti-fascists and citizens of Slav origin and demolish everything. These fascist bands, quietly watched by the Allied military organs, are insulting our country, our peoples, our most responsible personalities, in the most disgusting fashion.12

The AMG and the "fascist infiltrators" were also blamed for attacks upon Yugoslav army officers. Tito claimed that the agreement of 1945 had been violated by the AMG, because of that body's great injustices toward Yugoslavia and the people of Zone A. The state of affairs which Tito then described as the present happenings in Venezia Giulia was bordering on the incredible. According to the Marshal, authorities had taken away all civil liberties, torn down Yugoslav flags and violated tombs of Yugoslavs killed in the fight against fascism. "These incidents," added Tito, "are characteristic of the attitude of the Allied occupation authorities towards Yugoslavia and the people of this region."

Then Tito mentioned a supposedly Allied action which would prove to be significant in the months to come. He spoke of Allied flights over Yugoslav territory as a
provocation and a danger to peace and claimed that since February 11, 233 such flights had taken place. All of this had been in spite of Yugoslav protests to AMG and Great Britain.

The speech concluded with the usual commentary of professed good relations with all, including the U.S., Great Britain, France, Hungary, and Greece. A few words were put in expressing the Yugoslav debt to and continuing need of UNRRA aid. And finally the terms of the good relations between Yugoslavia and her Slav brothers—Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland—were expressed. In this speech were promises of attitudes and actions to come if only the Allies had listened more closely. The problem involved in listening was not one of ignorance of the situation on the part of the U.S. and Great Britain, but more one of credibility that this small national actually was willing to back up words with action.

During the same week in which Tito made his speech, the U.S. Political Adviser to Allied Force Headquarters, Kirk, reported to the Secretary of State regarding the civilian situation in Venezia Giulia. Unrest and a noticeable drop in the morale of the population of Zone A was noted. The civilians had talked of runs on banks and mass evacuation by the Italian population. General Harding strongly suggested that measures be taken immediately by the Allies to regain the confidence of the
people of Zone A. The importance of this uneasy situation was further reflected by a meeting on March 6, 1946 of the Secretaries of War, State, and Navy. Byrnes was disturbed by recent messages from Venezia Giulia and felt that the rapid demobilization of U.S. troops was a major factor in this matter.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff also expressed deep concern over developments in the area and "the continued unfriendly attitude of Yugoslavia in view of existing agreements and recognition of that government by the United States. Intelligence reports indicate a strengthening of Yugoslav forces in the Yugoslav occupied zone of Venezia Giulia and the possibility of unfavorable action by Tito's forces should they consider the peace terms with Italy not satisfactory." In a statement to the CCS General Morgan reiterated the U.S.-British intention to fight Yugoslav troops to the Morgan Line* if they advanced. He felt that this statement "would do much to allay civilian fears and to strengthen our own position."

By March 20 the situation had become much worse. There had been recent Yugoslav troop movements in Venezia Giulia and "renewed and unwarranted criticism from abroad of Allied Military Government in Zone A." Also it was reported that there had been attempts to create incidents of unrest in AMG territory. Not to be swayed by these verbal attacks, the British and American forces expressed
their determination to remain until a territorial agree-
ment had been reached. These reports of military action
and criticism by the Yugoslavs did a great deal to aggra-
vate the already tense political situation. The military
reports and moves were of extreme importance to both the
Allies and Yugoslavia in the forthcoming meeting of the
Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris, beginning April,
1946.

As the ministers gathered to discuss, among other
things, the topic of Trieste, the diplomatic channels
between Washington and Belgrade were constantly busy. On
April 9, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes completed
arrangements for the U.S. recognition of the Tito govern-
ment as the duly constituted leadership of the republic
of Yugoslavia. Within a week, however, the United
States was addressing strong notes of protest to the Yugo-
slav government. To date, the U.S. had not seen imple-
mented the promises made at Yalta and desired to see the
establishment of a democracy. Also, investigations had
been made regarding the Yugoslav charges of AMG action in
Venezia Giulia and had found such allegations as those by
Tito concerning the movement of "truckloads of 'fascist
bandits' into Venezia Giulia" to be wholly untrue and
highly inflammatory. The U.S. government was also con-
cerned over developments affecting American property and
business interests in Yugoslavia and wished to have this
matter clarified with the help of the Yugoslav government. Another important matter which concerned the relations of these two countries at this time was the non-existence of any form of bilateral air agreement. The U.S. had established such agreements with other friendly nations either during or directly after World War II. This issue was later to become of prime importance during the crisis of U.S.-Yugoslav relations in the summer of 1946.

Meanwhile, the military situation in Venezia Giulia was, for the Allies, growing worse. The realization of a possible offensive action by the Yugoslavs in Zone B caused the British and U.S. troops to have second thoughts regarding the UNRRA aid which had been poured into Yugoslavia. "As of the end of January 1946, 10,401 trucks and 3300 trailers, predominantly from U.S. sources, [had] been turned over [to Yugoslavia], as well as other material and equipment of actual or value." Nor was this all. The War Department had noted that UNRRA had scheduled delivery of 5 C-47s to the Yugoslavs. The U.S. had even contemplated loaning them mine sweepers. The idea of being killed in a battle after the end of a war was distasteful enough; the thought of being killed by one's own weapons was totally disgusting. In the light of aggressive Yugoslav moves toward U.S. troops in Western Zone A, further U.S. aid through UNRRA became a questionable action.
While the U.S. military wondered what to do about possible Yugoslav attacks in the Istrian peninsula and the government officials tried to come to an understanding as to what each nation expected from the other, the diplomats were meeting in Paris. Although not as directly involved with the work of maintaining the peace in this threatening situation, the representatives at the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting were nevertheless inextricably involved in the problems of the Allies and Yugoslavia in Venezia Giulia. More than any other group they were the ones who internationalized the situation. They played upper-level politics—each was out for the good of his own country and no other. At the conference the three forces—United States—Great Britain, Yugoslavia, Soviet Union—were playing dual roles. On one level they were international decision makers reshaping the postwar world. On the second level they were involved in their own three-way conflict which in turn placed them within the cold war political framework.

The issue which demanded the most attention was of course that of Trieste. After ordering five separate studies and subsequent proposed settlements, the Council of Foreign Ministers reached a compromise decision in June. The "French Line" was to be adopted. By virtue of this Italy would cede to Yugoslavia 3,000 square miles of territory which included the Isonzo Valley, Istria and
Pola. The population of this region was 225,000 slavs and 128,000 Italians. Trieste was to be placed under international control. Yugoslav reaction to this proposal was immediate and bitter. Edvard Kardelj in a press conference June 27, outlined the Yugoslav position in regard to this plan for the settlement of the Trieste issue.

First, Kardelj stated that the inclusion of the area of Venezia Giulia into Yugoslavia was a necessary measure for the security of the Yugoslavs against future attacks from Italy or Germany. He also claimed this region as rightfully part of Yugoslavia by virtue of its population. Basing his figures on 1945 census of Istria and discounting the population of Trieste, Kardelj said that in the western region of Venezia Giulia there were 101,216 Yugoslavs and 56,182 Italians and therefore there was a Yugoslav majority. He also claimed that "the majority of the Trieste Italians desire[d] a settlement of the Trieste question on the basis of Yugoslav proposals."

From this point, Kardelj launched into an anti-Allied tirade saying that their negative attitude toward Yugoslavia "entail[ed] certain negative moral and political consequences as [regarded] future cooperation among nations." He also charged the Western Allies with causing the Yugoslavs great difficulties by their actions and attitudes since the end of the war. He did concede,
however, that the West's aid through UNRRA had been helpful. The West's "bad attitude" toward the Yugoslavia had been reflected, according to Kardelj, in 1) the ultimatum regarding the Yugoslav occupation of Trieste, 2) the "open support of the quisling and war criminal Draja Mihailovich," 3) the exclusion of Yugoslavia from receiving reparations from Germany and Italy, and 4) the Allies' holding of Yugoslav ships and property abroad.

Returning to the Trieste issue Kardelj plainly stated the Yugoslav sentiment. "Yugoslavia cannot agree to the main city of the Julian March, Trieste, being torn away from the rest of the province, nor can she accept to be cut off, at only a few kilometres from the sea, from the only adequate port she possesses.... Yugoslavia will not sign, or give her agreement in any form whatsoever to, any peace treaty in which these just claims of hers will not obtain satisfaction." He felt that any final decision regarding Venezia Giulia and Trieste should be left up to the Conference of the 21 Countries. He saw the UN or the Council of Foreign Ministers as no real way in which to deal with the problem. Besides, in the second, larger arena of opinion, Yugoslavia would hopefully have a better chance of achieving her ideals because she would be a small nation in a heterogeneous group instead of one small nation against the great world powers. However, the Paris Conference continued and the Yugoslavs were eventually
to be dragged into settlement. Before this happened, however, there were certain events which threatened the security of the world and the peace between east and west, Yugoslavia and the United States.

By the summer of 1946 Tito's regime and its stand on Trieste had become a source of great worry to the Allies, the United States in particular. Tito's Partisans were constantly active in the disputed area with various forms of conspiracy and outright terrorism. Violent propaganda was carried on by Yugoslavia agents while the press and radio in Belgrade, Ljubljana, and Zagreb portrayed the United States and Great Britain as Nazi territory. The Allies who were supplying Tito with provisions "worth almost as much as his whole current state budget" (via UNRRA aid) were caricatured as Hitlers and Goerings. These belligerent actions by the Tito government against the Western Allies and the U.S. in particular were clear signs of the strong hostility for these governments which was held by the Yugoslavs. In tone and content, the propaganda assaults on the U.S. from the Yugoslavs equalled and surpassed those of the Soviets. Once again the independent action of the Yugoslavs was upsetting to the Russians. Because she had refused to back Yugoslavia in her demands over Trieste, Russia became less and less an object of esteem and leadership to the Tito government. Never really a Soviet satellite in the sense that the
other eastern European nations were, Yugoslavia was pushing herself into the new category of nationalist communist republic. For this she was receiving the admiration of the other east European nations and was becoming more a liability than an asset to Stalin's plans for post war European communism. Nevertheless, the outward appearance of harmony—such as was presented during Tito's visit to Moscow in the spring of 1946—was maintained if for no other reason than to keep the Western Allies—the U.S. in particular—guessing as to Soviet moves.

There was no guessing involved, however, when the Yugoslavs began taking direct action against any representatives of the U.S. government—civil or military—in Yugoslavia. Immediately after the end of the war when communications were still lacking in Yugoslavia, the government authorities allowed the United States Embassy to keep its own aircraft at Zemun field near Belgrade. Since communications had been restored by 1946, however, the Yugoslavs ordered that all U.S. air personnel and navigation facilities be withdrawn from Zemun field by June 1. This move would make the American government in Yugoslavia totally dependent upon Yugoslav services, the reliability of which was quite questionable. The words "immediate enforcement" of the order seemed to be the most ominous part of the passage. This also had an effect
upon British aircraft, once stationed at Zemun under the same circumstances as U.S. planes. The British notified the Yugoslavs that unless that government allowed British craft to use Zemun, the British Foreign Office would take steps to prevent Yugoslav aircraft from flying over British territory or zones of occupation. They also would not allow British aircraft to carry Yugoslav officials, freight, or mail. As an alternative to such action the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade decided to deliver a note to the Yugoslav Foreign Office, reminding that government of the problems which would be caused by the closing of ATC (air transport command) at Zemun field. It was to remind the Yugoslavs that the U.S. had sent letters of inquiry regarding civil aviation but that the Yugoslav government had never answered. Neither had the Yugoslavs replied to an American note of April 25, in which the U.S. pointed out that the American Embassy in Belgrade was not the only American element dependent on the use of Zemun field—it was also used by U.S. representatives from the Allied Control commission for Hungary and Rumania.

In a note received by the American Embassy in Belgrade on May 27, 1946, the Yugoslav government demanded that the "Embassy's remaining air link with its government be severed on a date arbitrarily set by [the Yugoslav government] without replacement by any American civil air service." The tone of this note made quite obvious that
the Yugoslavs did not want to discuss this issue, in spite of its importance to the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade. These planes were essential as long as there were no U.S. civil aircraft allowed in the area. Because of the obvious Yugoslav awareness of all the U.S. assistance (including the phenomenal amount of UNRRA aid) this unwillingness to reach a settlement of a potentially serious situation was totally unwarranted and uncooperative. The U.S. government was justified in its worries that this note meant that the Tito government intended to hamper the functioning of the U.S. Embassy. As an aid in beginning the discussions for settlement of this and other problems in U.S.-Yugoslav relations at the time, the Yugoslav Ambassador-designate, Kosanovic, was advised to delay his departure for America and likewise, U.S. Ambassador Patterson would postpone his return to Belgrade. Not even these moves, however, were successful in easing the tension which was constantly building between the two countries.

As one who was more readily able to evaluate the situation, U.S. Charge Shantz felt that the problems existing would not have arisen had it not been for the uncooperative spirit of the Yugoslav government.

Indications are plain that [Yugoslavia's] rulers are determined to render ineffective our representation here. Although [the] Ambassador's return should be interpreted
as evidence of good will and desire to reach [a] settlement of [our] problems, those in power have indicated they do not understand good will or wish settlement of problems, which they have in large part created and might construe his return as evidence of [U.S.] weakness and [a] warrant for fresh encroachments. We foresaw in advance their demands to eliminate [our] Embassy's air and radio communications and I believe it to be [a] question of time before they attempt to oust USIS. We do not believe [the] Ambassador's personal contacts with Tito will help matters. As Subašić told Hohenthal in Zagreb recently, Tito must be regarded as having no more power than a Russian officer of Marshal's rank.

So throughout the spring of 1946 the problems of ATC and Yugoslav obstruction of regular functioning of Allied governments within that country were the major source of antagonism of the U.S. The summer was of course devoted to the problems of threatened eruption of Yugoslav hostilities in Venezia Giulia. Then in July, the problem of air service within Yugoslavia became prominent once more.

In reply to the U.S. note requesting agreements on civil air service in Yugoslavia the Yugoslavs stated that the "principal obstacle to [the] solution of [the] question of [the] Embassy's airplane and other aviation problems [were] caused by constant flights over [the] Yugoslav northwest frontier by Allied combat and transport airplanes. In spite of reiterated requests, flights over Yugoslav territory [had continued] unceasingly." Other problems in Yugoslavia which the Tito government blamed
upon the attitude and actions of the allies included maritime and river navigation and rail communications. Yugoslavia then went on to state that until these three problems supposedly created by the Allies were solved, the government could not take up the U.S. question of civil aviation.

While the Yugoslav diplomats and politicians were at work outlining U.S.-Yugoslav problems in Belgrade, the Yugoslav military in Venezia Giulia was testing the authority of the U.S. military in the Istrian peninsula. On July 12 three Yugoslav soldiers crossed illegally into Zone A. A U.S. patrol sent to investigate was fired upon. In returning the fire, one Yugoslav was killed. A second U.S. patrol of platoon strength was sent out and it encountered a Yugoslav patrol of 10 to 15 men. This time the Yugoslavs withdrew and there were no hostilities. The incidents were settled the next day by the commanders of the respective forces. The U.S. lodged a protest against this unprovoked firing by Yugoslav troops upon American military and the illegal crossing of Yugoslav troops into Zone A. News of this incident, when it reached the Yugoslav and United States government officials was certainly a determining factor in the formation of policy during this period of strained relations between the two nations.

The sense of conflict between the U.S. and Yugoslavia
was magnified as an agreement was sought in the U.S. civil aviation controversy. With the closing of Zemun field to the U.S. in June, all ATC personnel were to have left the country. However, of the four persons in this category, three were in the protective custody of the U.S. Embassy and had been refused exit visas. When these persons finally left there would be no more ATC or EATS (European Air Transport Service) in Belgrade to handle incoming planes. Any time the twice weekly run from Vienna to Belgrade was made by EATS the Yugoslav Ministry of National Defense had to be given 48 hour previous notice. A request had to be filed with this department, giving the full name of each crew member, passport number, and the number of the plane. Although the U.S. protested strongly to these harsh restrictions, Yugoslavia remained obdurate.

As if this were not aggravation enough, the Yugoslav government next demanded that all ATC property at Zemun field—radio equipment and radio sound sets—as well as all air corps supplies there be turned over to them. As of July 19, theft of some of this equipment was reported. An export permit was requested for all ATC items at the airfield, but the Yugoslavs chose to ignore this. Negotiation of civil aviation rights were, as could be expected, at a standstill.

On July 18, the Tito government threw yet another difficulty in the way of Allied aviation in Yugoslavia.
They demanded that all EATS flights from Vienna to Belgrade be charted to enter Yugoslavia over Subotica. This meant that the planes would have to pass over Hungary and therefore needed to get Russian clearance. This new regulation would cause a loss in flying time and mean extra trouble for EATS in getting two permits for each flight.

It was becoming more and more evident that a war of nerves was being waged against the U.S. If there was not trouble politically, there would be militarily. If there were no military disturbances, there would be diplomatic ones. The Yugoslavs were fast becoming a painful thorn in the side of the U.S.
FOOTNOTES


3 The AVNOJ was a group of Partisan representatives founded under the leadership of Tito at Bihać on November 26, 1942.


5 Hoffman and Neal, Yugoslavia and the New Communism, n. 1, p. 77.


10 Hoffman and Neal, Yugoslavia and the New Communism, p. 80.


13 See above, p. 23.

14 J. B. Tito, *Yugoslavia's Foreign Policy*, p. 11.


16 Lt. General Sir John Harding, British commanding General, XIII Corps in Italy.


19 General William Morgan, Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater.


*Morgan Line* By virtue of an agreement between representatives of the Allied Military and Yugoslavia in Belgrade on June 9, 1945, the Morgan Line became the boundary dividing Istria and the Slovenian Littoral. The cities of Trieste and Pula remained under strict Allied control. Practically all of Istria and the Slovenian Littoral was left under Yugoslav control.


22 Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Truman, Washington, April 9, 1946, in *ibid.*, p. 884.
23 See above, p. 7.


25 The Secretary of War (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Washington, April 17, 1946, in ibid., p. 887.

26 At the Paris Peace Conference there were five different studies made on the Trieste issue. The Russians proposed the line to divide Italy and Yugoslavia to be "on a line running northward from the Gulf of Trieste, starting well east of the Isonza River mouth thus giving to Yugoslavia Trieste and the predominantly Italian cities of Pola, Monfalcone, and Gorizia." Kardelj, however, requested that Yugoslavia be given the entire area and this motion was seconded by Molotov. (Schneiderman, p. 63.)


28 Edward Kardelj, Yugoslavia's Claims to Trieste, New York: United Committee of South-Slavic Americans, 1946, p. 5.

29 Ibid., p. 8.

30 See above, p. 3.

31 Draja Mihailovitch had been the leader of the Cetnici forces in the Yugoslav civil war during World War II. Tito brought charges against him as having been a nazi collaborator. When he was brought to trial in 1946, many American ex-service men whom he had saved during the war when their planes had crashed in the rough Yugoslav terrain wished to testify in his behalf. These requests were refused by the Tito government and all protests from the U.S. and Great Britain were ignored. Mihailovitch was sentenced and executed, thus leaving Tito as the undisputed leader of Yugoslavia.

32 Kardelj, Yugoslavia's Claim to Trieste, p. 10.


36 The Chargé in Yugoslavia (Shantz) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, May 27, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, pt. 6, p. 894.


38 The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (W. Averell Harriman), Washington, June 1, 1946, in ibid., pp. 895-897.

39 USIS is the United States Information Service. It operated reading rooms and centers of information concerning the U.S. throughout Yugoslavia.

40 Ivan Šubašić, Prime Minister of the Yugoslav Government in Exile in London.

41 Theodore H. Hohenthal, Consul at Zagreb.

42 The Chargé in Yugoslavia (Shantz) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, June 6, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, pt. 6, p. 897.

43 See above, p. 17.

44 The Chargé in Yugoslavia (Shantz) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, July 12, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, pt. 6, pp. 910-911.

46 Military Attache in Yugoslavia (Partridge) to War Department, Belgrade, July 19, 1946, in ibid., pp. 912-913.
CHAPTER II
NARRATIVE OF THE INCIDENTS
AND IMMEDIATE REPERCUSSIONS

In August, 1946, Tito's Yugoslav government openly challenged the United States by ordering the shooting down of two American aircraft over Yugoslav territory. The first of these incidents occurred on August 9 when an American C-47 transport plane on an EATS run from Vienna to Udine, was forced down by Yugoslav fighter planes near Ljubljana. Official notification to Washington concerning this event was in the form of a telegram to the Secretary of State from the Chargé in Yugoslavia, Harold Shantz. According to his report, the C-47 was circling the Ljubljana airport when it was approached by Yugoslav fighters. They chased the plane and then reportedly gave the U.S. craft signals to land which the pilot ignored. Yugoslav fighters then forced the C-47 to land. All that was known at this time by the U.S. was that the plane had ten people aboard—eight military and two civilians. An investigation was ordered and the Yugoslav Government requested that the United States Government make an immediate move to prevent such violations of Yugoslav airspace in the future. Press accounts
were more detailed in their presentation. The aircraft involved was on an ETS (European Transport Service) flight from Klagenfurt, Austria, to Udine, Italy. The pilot and co-pilot were reported injured but the other remained unhurt. The plane itself was badly damaged, not, however, by gunfire, but by the crash landing in the meadow.

The subsequent investigation of the event by the American government included testimony from the crew and the pilot, Captain William Crombie. The Yugoslav investigation offered counter testimony from civilian and military eyewitnesses of the incident. The full reports on these investigations did not come until weeks after the shooting occurred and between August 9 and the release of the official government statements, many diplomatic charges and threats passed between the two nations.

As a climax to the occurrences of August 9, Yugoslav Assistant Foreign Minister Velebit handed U.S. Chargé Shantz a note dated August 10. In energetic language the Yugoslav Government protested the continual violation of Yugoslav airspace by Allied craft, and especially those of the United States. These flights were allegedly made over northwestern Yugoslavia and Zone B of Venezia Giulia. The Government also charged that "between July 16 and August 8 unauthorized flights over Yugoslav territory [were] made by 172 aircraft [which] included 87 bombers, 40 fighters and 45 transports." It was further stated
in the note that American planes had been guilty of repeated violations of Yugoslav territory in spite of government warnings to the U.S. military attaché, Col. Richard C. Partridge, and a speech concerning these matters delivered by Tito in April to the Yugoslav Parliament. Partridge stated that he had passed the notes along to the suitable officials. He then told the Yugoslavs that the American government had ordered that no U.S. aircraft fly over the territory of "friendly" nations.

On August 11, another Yugoslav note was issued, this one to the United States Embassy in Belgrade. It stated that on August 9 at 1310 hours the C-47 was circling Ljubljana. Yugoslav fighters gave the internationally recognized signals to land (rocking wings) in the vicinity but the pilot apparently paid no attention and made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the frontier. It was at this time that the Yugoslav fighters forced the transport plane down.

On the same days that Yugoslavia was justifying her actions to the United States and the rest of the Allies, other nations joined the U.S. in its outrage over the incident. This had been the first reported European armed aggression against a U.S. aircraft since the end of World War II. The British embassy stated that though no such incidents had occurred involving British and Yugoslav planes, in the past officials in Vienna had given
strict orders that British aircraft were not to enter Yugoslav territory.

Also on the 11th, the U.S. commander of the Capodichino airport near Naples, Col. John Griffin told the press that negotiations were in progress for the release of the passengers and crew taken from the downed C-47 by Yugoslav officials. Although observers at this time thought the incident would soon be closed, they were entirely mistaken. The following morning, August 12, was filled with headlines for the next day's newspapers. The Yugoslav officials were holding the occupants of the plane hostage at an undisclosed location. When a U.S. State Department representative asked to see the passengers and crew, the Yugoslav officer in charge at the scene of the crash refused to tell him where they were. Harold Shantz later stated that the Yugoslav government had given no indication as to when the hostages would be released.

The only news that Shantz could offer the officials in Washington was that the pilot and co-pilot were not injured, as was thought earlier. The only passenger injured was of unknown nationality - not American, British or French. The Chargé reiterated, however, that the Yugoslavs had refused the American representative information as to where and for how long the passengers and crew were being held. The authorities also refused to divulge the names of those interned, but said that they
were being well taken care of and had suitable food and lodging.

It was the press coverage of the incident which set in motion the diplomatic exchanges for the next days. Upon reading that the U.S. representative (American consul at Zagreb, Theodore J. Hohenthal) was not allowed to see the passengers or crew, Acting Secretary of State Acheson sent an urgent telegram to Shantz. He authorized the Charge to inform the Foreign Office of the U.S. investigation of the entire incident. The Secretary also said that the actions of the Yugoslav officials in denying the U.S. representative access to the plane and passengers were not only a hindrance to the U.S. in its investigation, but also a breach of international law "inherent in friendly relations between states whereby recognized consular officers have free right of access to their nationals within [a] country in which [they are] stationed."

Continuing along the line of protest notes, Acheson sent a second telegram to Shantz on August 14, this one outlining a preliminary reply to the Yugoslav note of August 10. The note was to stress five major points. 1) The U.S. regretted the accidental intrusion of her aircraft into Yugoslav territory in spite of orders to avoid this area. 2) the C-47 was on a regular flight from Austria to Italy and had run into bad weather in the Alps. Because of this the plane was lost, and therefore
was at a lower altitude attempting to regain its regular route when the Yugoslav fighters forced it down. 3) Because the above-mentioned was all the information which the U.S. Government had at the time due to the inavailability of the pilot, 4) the government was quite disturbed by the report that the U.S. Consul at Zagreb was not allowed to see the passengers and therefore assumed that these persons were being kept incommunicado. 5) The U.S. government, however, assumed that the aforementioned manner of holding these people was simply a misunderstanding and that no breach of international law was intended or committed. Shantz was also asked to make arrangements with the Yugoslav Government so that a plane could be sent to pick up the passengers and crew and also that the C-47 be turned over to the Military Authority for disposition. A further reply to the note of the Yugoslav Foreign Office was forthcoming as soon as the investigation of this case was finished.

Although the C-47 incident was at this moment the predominant issue involving Yugoslav-American relations, there were other matters which required official attention. On August 15, 1946, Shantz delivered a formal note of protest to the Yugoslav Government concerning the movement of Yugoslav troops into Zone A of Venezia Giulia the previous month. The delivery of this note, though certainly not prompted by the forcing down of the aircraft,
was probably expedited and perhaps strengthened in language because of that incident. The occurrences in Venezia Giulia and all along the Morgan Line were to form a strong under-current which helped intensify the severity of the two incidents involving U.S. aircraft in both U.S. official and public opinion.

The following three days, August 16 through 19, were devoted to attempts to work a settlement between the United States and Yugoslavia. It was during this time that Consul Hohenthal was allowed by the Yugoslavs to speak with American personnel from the C-47. In statements to Secretary Acheson, dated August 19 and released to the press on August 20, the Consul gave a report of his investigation of the incident and the pilot of the downed plane, Captain William Crombie, made a formal report of the event. These two documents furnished the U.S. Government with the most detailed accounts of the incident to that time.

The Consul's report was made after he and Assistant Military Attaché Stratton were allowed to see four crew members and three U.S. passengers on August 16 in the presence of a Yugoslav Fourth Army officer. According to the co-pilot the incident was caused by mutual misunderstanding. He saw the Yugoslav fighters but thought they were British, due to the similar types of markings on the crafts. Because of this error, he assumed he was
over Udine, Italy, and not in Yugoslavia. He therefore did not understand what message was being sent by the other planes and only rocked his wings as a gesture of recognition. Attaché Stratton reported that according to the crew, the Yugoslav fighters forced the C-47 down, kept firing as the craft descended, and stopped only when the plane crash landed in the field. Hohenthal continued that all personal effects, including luggage, papers, and the ship's log had been confiscated by the Yugoslavs.

When Hohenthal and Stratton requested permission to see the plane, they were refused. Officials said that the Belgrade government would decide when they could see the plane and when the passengers and crew would be released. Commenting on this action, the Consul recounted the U.S. oral protests of August 12-19 and notes of August 13 and 16 requesting release of hostages. None of these requests had been met by the Yugoslavs and at that time the Yugoslav Government showed indifference to these communications, at best.

Captain Crombie supplied more detailed information of the incident in his report to Acheson. The craft was on course from Vienna to Udine and the weather was not good. To escape the weather, they climbed to 15,000 feet and used their instruments to guide them. Siting Klagenfurt through a break in the clouds, they set on a heading which should have taken them to Udine. After about 15 minutes
they turned to the south. Breaking out of the clouds they realized they were not over Udine but in Yugoslavia. Crombie was trying to orient himself and find a near-by airfield to set down in when he was assailed by the three fighters. Almost immediately came the sound of tracer fire going directly beneath the cockpit. Crombie then went down to 6,000 feet where he heard gunfire once again, but this time he was hit. He managed to get the plane to a cornfield where he crashed, knocking the propellors off. A crowd quickly gathered and soon the army officials had come to take all in the plane into town. These detailed accounts of the event were to be the ammunition of the U.S. in their later arguments with Tito and the Yugoslav government as to the actual events of the day of August 9.

The information supplied by Crombie and Hohenthal led the U.S. government to dictate to Ambassador Patterson the form for a note to the Yugoslav Foreign Office. This note recapitulated the U.S. grievances to date concerning the forcing down of the C-47 on August 9: the unwarranted aggression of the fighters against the craft of a friendly nation and the holding of the passengers and crew without notification as to their release.

One sentence in the communication was devoted to a report which portended only steady decline in the quest for any sort of Yugoslav-American understanding at this time. "[I]t is reported from Trieste that a second
United States plane en route to Italy from Austria is missing after having last reported itself under machine gun attack." The Yugoslavs had shot down a second U.S. aircraft. A new crisis had arisen.

This new development and its potential seriousness as a negative factor in settling the controversy of the C-47 brought the U.S. government almost to the point of delivery of an ultimatum. With the hope that such measures would not be necessary, the government at this time merely instructed the Embassy in Belgrade "to protest most emphatically against this action and attitude of the Yugoslav authorities." U.S. representatives were also to restate the government's demand for the immediate release of passengers and crew and to request from the Yugoslav government a statement as to the safety and undisturbed passage of U.S. craft over that country's territory when forced off course by inclimate weather. Yugoslav authorities now would have the assurance of the U.S. government that no official flights of that nation's planes would be made over Yugoslavia without previous clearance. The final instruction included in the note was to make certain that the Yugoslav government understood that the U.S. government would reserve the right to claim compensation for the injuries to the crew and costs of repairs to the plane.

The increased concern of the government over these
incidents was reflected by the growing public resentment of the Yugoslav actions. In a press conference on August 20, Acting Secretary of State Acheson tried to inform the nation of what had transpired and what action the U.S. and the Yugoslav governments were taking. After the reported shooting of the second aircraft, Acheson stated, the U.S. government had ordered as of August 20 the cessation of transport flights over Yugoslavia. In reporting the probable cause of the incidents, the Secretary failed to arrive at any concrete reasons why the Yugoslavs should take such drastic action. "Nobody shoots down planes that are lost between clouds and are trying to get home. This isn't the ordinary aid to navigation with which they are familiar." When asked why the Yugoslavs might be so touchy regarding this area, the Secretary did not know if there were any Yugoslav troop concentrations in the area or any movements on the part of the military of that country which would require such strict air security. When asked about the possibility of negotiations for a reciprocal air treaty with Yugoslavia, Acheson again could not answer.

This conference, in spite of the lack of information it presented to the public, was significant. In it Acheson had a vehicle for the restatement of the U.S. outrage over the incidents and an opportunity to publicly harrass the Yugoslav government a bit further, and perhaps
just enough to make them give up the passengers and crew of the first C-47 and furnish information concerning the second downed transport plane. The seeming inability of the Secretary to answer questions regarding U.S. policy and action was probably rooted more in lack of information on the part of the U.S. than in unwillingness to divulge U.S. strategy against Yugoslavia. If nothing else, the conference served as a government sign to the American people that there was governmental concern and planned retaliation for this latest assault upon the war-weary U.S.

The Secretary was not alone in his ignorance of the real facts during this tense time which seemed to grow worse by the hour. On the same day of the news conference, the Joint (American) and Combined (Anglo-American) Chiefs of Staff met in Washington to contemplate the increasingly serious Yugoslav situation. While Yugoslavs had shot down and Russians had in other ways intimidated U.S. crafts, Americans had taken no hostile action toward planes of these countries flying over U.S.-held territory in Europe (i.e., American zone in Germany). The military men were quite puzzled as to the reason for the attacks, particularly because of the great amount of aid given the Yugoslavs during and after the War by the United States government. Speculations as to the Yugoslav reasons behind the attacks seemed to favor one of two general ideas:
1) Yugoslavia was showing off to combat a small nation inferiority complex or 2) Yugoslavia was following the directions of the Russian planners set up in Vienna. A third possible reason which the Allies seemed to prefer to ignore was that Yugoslavia was extremely sensitive about Trieste, and did not believe that the American flights over their country were so innocent.

What was agreed upon at the meeting was that the U.S. could not allow itself to be stampeded into another war by anger. Worry was expressed, however, over the limit to which the military could allow itself to be insulted. If U.S. citizens continued to be killed or imprisoned by the Yugoslavs then a wave of public opinion would demand retaliation. The military, however, left foreign policy decisions up to the State Department. They would be the ones to decide if a break in relations was called for. To this time, it could at least be said that the State Department and the military were on an equal basis: neither had obtained adequate information on the situation to formulate concrete policy.

Despite the lack of information and policy planning, there was a definite attitude held by all in the government, especially in the State Department. This was a hard-line approach in dealing with the Yugoslavs. Acheson reflected this as later on August 20 he sent a telegram to Patterson, the American ambassador in Belgrade. The
ambassador was scheduled to meet with Tito at Bled, on
August 23, and in view of the recent events, Acheson felt
that some special instructions were in order. Patterson
was ordered to reaffirm the U.S. position in the incidents
i.e., the planes were merely lost in bad weather and would
not have gone over Yugoslav territory except under these
extreme circumstances.

The incidents of the 9th and the 19th were not the
only items meriting attention. In the case of William
Wedge, reciprocal immunities were ignored, according to
the U.S. On May 1, Wedge, then an embassy guard, was
driving a jeep without official permission and was allegedly
intoxicated when he ran into and killed a Yugoslav Par-
tisan officer and injured a by-stander. The Secretary
also mentioned that the embassy had had other difficulties
recently. These, however, were not enumerated.

In concluding his message, Acheson wished Patterson
to stress "that the general attitude of [the Yugoslav]
authorities as reflected in these difficulties contrast[ed]
markedly with the material assistance to the Yugoslav
people given by the U.S. freely and without thought of
political advantage during and since the cessation of
hostilities."

Late in the evening of August 20, the situation con-
tinued to grow worse. Acheson received an urgent telegram
from Patterson regarding the Yugoslav account of the
second incident. In a note to the American ambassador, the Yugoslav Foreign Office first protested the continuing of unauthorized flights over Yugoslav territory and stated that since August 10, 44 such flights had been observed. According to Yugoslav officials, on August 19 an American airplane near Bled was "invited" to land via continuous signals from Yugoslav craft for a period of approximately 15 minutes. The U.S. aircraft refused and was being chased by Yugoslav fighters when it caught fire and crashed. Two of the crew were thought to have parachuted out, however, there definitely were casualties in this instance. While it regretted the occurrence of this "unhappy accident" the Yugoslav government hastened to place the blame first upon the U.S. for not heeding Yugoslav warnings of possible retaliations should such illegal flights continue, and secondly upon the crew of the plane for not following clearly given and easily recognizable signals to land. The Yugoslavs stated that they would begin a full investigation immediately. In order to prevent any further incidents of this nature, the U.S. government was again requested to halt all air traffic over the area.

This last exchange of notes revealed the severity of the situation from the points of view of both governments. In the already sensitive atmosphere of the Paris Peace Conference was a variety of reactions to this conflict
between a major Western power and a small, newly established communist Balkan nation. U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, upon receiving the news of the downing of the second plane, asked for a meeting with the head of the Yugoslav delegation, Edvard Kardelj. When the Secretary confronted the Yugoslav with the U.S. information regarding the two incidents and demanded an immediate explanation of his government's activities, Kardelj said he did not know the details of these events. However, he quickly added that these were, to his way of thinking, simply continued violations of Yugoslav airspace by U.S. military air craft. The U.S. Secretary came back with the statement that these were indeed not military but passenger-carrying transport planes. He asked for immediate release of the crew and passengers of the first C-47, explanation of what charges they were being held on, and a full investigation of the second incident. Byrnes went almost to the point of directing an ultimatum to the Yugoslav government. "I told him [Kardelj] then that upon the receipt of this information from him the U.S. Government would have to consider what steps it should take in the circumstances but that we would not tolerate the shooting down of American planes or the detention of American citizens in this manner. Kardelj promised to communicate immediately with his Government and let me know as soon as possible."

The representatives of the other nations present at
the conference either remained informed yet uncommitted or allowed themselves to become polarized into the Yugoslav or U.S. camp. While Great Britain, because of her similar experience with the Yugoslavs (her planes had also been harassed, but none had been shot down) and her strong alliance with the U.S., sided with America, the Russians, although in not so formal a manner as the British, took the part of Yugoslavia. As Milovan Djilas later noted, "Molotov almost embraced Kardelj in Paris after the shooting down of two American planes in Yugoslavia, though he cautioned him against shooting down a third."

In the uneasy post-world war situation these incidents might have served as an excuse for armed conflict. For this reason the Yugoslav moves seemed incomprehensible to the Western power in general and to the United States in particular.

The second shooting of a U.S. aircraft on August 19 was more inflammatory than the first incident simply because it was the second in ten days. Ambassador Patterson had barely published the note describing the details of the first incident when news of the second was broadcast. The Yugoslavs may have intended the shootings as retaliation against the United States for various incidents in the American occupation zone. On August 19, a Yugoslav army officer, Major Vlado Despot, and three other Yugoslav soldiers, had driven a jeep into an anti-Yugoslav
Italian demonstration authorized by the Allied authorities and had exploded two hand grenades. The angry Italians had surrounded the car, but an Allied military vehicle rescued the Yugoslavs, only to find ammunition and hand grenades inside the jeep. For this Major Despot had been expelled from the Allied Zone.

After these incidents of Yugoslav anti Allied action, then, the second shooting caused a furor in the upper echelons of Allied military circles. All possible steps were to be taken to avoid friction between Yugoslavia and any of the Allied powers. The fact that the Yugoslavs had been so secretive as to the reasons for shooting down American planes which accidentally came within the national borders was reason for great suspicion. In a conference with Admiral Nimitz on August 21, however, General Eisenhower in reviewing the situation "could not conceive of the shooting down of two planes over Yugoslavia as being a casus belli...." In spite of the security which Eisenhower seemed to express, the extreme secrecy of the Yugoslavs about the northern region of their country made many think that perhaps this was done to screen off extensive military preparations. This idea was strengthened by the accounts of military build-ups given by Italian and Yugoslav refugees escaping from the Italian regions over which Tito was threatening to take control. According to these people, the entire Dalmatian, Montenegrin and
Albanian coasts were "being fortified with permanent works." Besides this apparent military threat to the U.S., there were also reported incidents of searching of ships entering and leaving Yugoslav ports. Full censorship was said to be in effect with nationals not allowed to associate with foreigners under penalty of confiscation of their property. "The propaganda against Americans and Britons [was] described as even more intense than that against the Italians." 

At this point the U.S. officials felt compelled to take definite steps. On August 21, Acting Secretary Acheson handed a note to the Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, Sergije Makiedo. This was an ultimatum to the Yugoslav government, the stipulations of which were to be fulfilled within 48 hours. The outrage of the Secretary was easily evident in the language of the note, even though it was written in the customary diplomatic style. The basis of the initial charges against the Yugoslav government were the inflammatory remarks made by that government in a note to the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, August 20. This note, which called the second shooting an "unhappy accident" and placed the responsibility for it upon the U.S. government and the crew of the downed plane, was rejected by Acheson. "The replies of the Yugoslav Government to our inquiries are wholly unsatisfactory to the government and shocking to the people of the United States."
The basic structure of the ultimatum was one of refutation of Yugoslav charges against the U.S. government, a reaffirmation of the displeasure of the American government with the Yugoslav handling of the August incidents—Acheson felt these were not accidents, but deliberate aggression—and then culminating with demands, a deadline, and a threat of non-military retaliation should the U.S. demands not be met.

The Secretary first refuted the charge that 44 unauthorized American flights had taken place over Yugoslavia between August 10 and August 20. According to Acheson, U.S. military records showed that only 32 flights had been scheduled for that time period in that area, all of which had been under strict orders not to violate Yugoslav territory. Next, he recounted the incident of August 9, reminding the Yugoslavs that the passengers and crew of that plane had been held by that government for 12 days. Third, Acheson gave reports of what the U.S. government then knew about the shooting incident on August 19. Yugoslav authorities reported that the plane was invited to land while over Bled, Yugoslavia. The Secretary claimed that the records at Klagenfurt showed the plane to be over Klagenfurt, Austria at that time, and not in Yugoslav territory. Information was lacking because of the unavailability of the two crews of the downed planes and therefore the U.S. could not make a statement as to the
The planes, regardless of their precise location, were not, according to the Secretary, any threat to Yugoslav sovereignty. The Yugoslav action against these passenger-carrying crafts was seen by Acheson as totally incongruous with the professed "friendly relations" between the United States and Yugoslavia. "The use of force by Yugoslavia under the circumstances was without the slightest justification in internation law...and was a plain violation of the obligations resting upon Yugoslavia under the Charter of the United Nations not to use force except in self-defense." Acheson also noted that Yugoslavia had never told the U.S. she would shoot down American aircraft within her borders. "The deliberate firing without warning on the unarmed passenger planes of a friendly nation is in the judgment of the United States an offense against the law of nations and the principles of humanity."

In closing, the U.S. Government put forth the following demands: 1) immediate release of U.S. passengers and crew in custody of the Yugoslav government, 2) permission be given to U.S. representatives to communicate with any member of the crews of the two planes still alive. If the demands were met within the 48-hour limit, the U.S. would seek appropriate resolution to the conflicts with Yugoslavia. If the demands were not met, however,
the U.S. proposed calling a meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations to take immediate action against the Yugoslavs.

The necessity for the delivery of such a severe ultimatum by the United States may be divided into immediate and long-range reasons. The immediate reasons were: 1) to attempt to force information from the Yugoslav Government regarding the incidents of August 9 and 19, and their repercussions and 2) by forcing this information to bring the problem to a quick solution before further aggression against U.S. aircraft occurred or before hostilities became necessary. The other, long-range reasons for the ultimatum most probably had to do with American international relations. The idea conveyed by the delivery of the note was that a world power, a democracy, could not allow itself to be intimidated by a small, supposedly friendly, communist nation. The ultimatum would also, it was hoped, fulfill a domestic need, that is, it was a psychological necessity to a war weary people, tired of having their men killed in battle. The American people were enraged by the seemingly senseless killings of U.S. soldiers after the end of the war. This public opinion required action.

The military was not without a voice in this tense moment. Although no such action had been planned by the diplomats or politicians, a military complement to the
ultimatum was given on August 20. In the Allied zone of Venezia Giulia, 10,000 troops from the U.S. 88th Division paraded in full war gear close to the Morgan Line. This show of armed might was reported to be for the purpose of reviewing the troops and bestowing military awards. However, it also served as a reminder to the Yugoslavs watching from the other side of the Line that the U.S. was willing to back up any threats it made against that country with armed strength.

The only problem with this show of might was that it could easily prove untrue. On the 21st, Acheson called a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their discussion of how to provide armed escort for planes on the Austrian-Italian route near Yugoslavia "brought up the whole question of what we [the United States] had with which to back the very strong protest note we [had sent] to the Tito government in Yugoslavia." In viewing the U.S. military capabilities should another war situation arise in the Balkans, the picture was not extremely bright. Because of rapid demobilization after the War, the Fleet was down to the bare necessities. Cooke's 7th Fleet was strong, but it could not serve the demands which would occur if war with Russia became a reality—that is, it was thought that troubles in the Far East would arise simultaneously. As far as the Army was concerned, Admiral D. C. Ramsey estimated its "available strength for
application in Europe as being 460 fighters of which possibly 175 could be called really trained first-line pilots and about 90 bombers." In other words, the U.S. could not stand another war at this time. It was entirely unthinkable—militarily, economically, and politically.

While the U.S. officials were delivering diplomatic notes and evaluating U.S. military capabilities, Tito was contradicting U.S. accounts of the first incident. In an address to the foundry workers at Jesinica, the Marshal said that he himself had been a witness to the incident, and, contrary to American claims, he said the weather was perfectly clear. Tito stated that these violations had been occurring frequently and the only answer the U.S. gave to his protests was a request for the numbers on the planes which flew over Yugoslav territory. "'How,' he asked, 'could we see the markings on planes which fly at up to 6,000 feet?'

"The Yugoslav premier, according to the statement, denounced 'certain sections of reactionaries' in the United States and Britain for the 'strange attitude adopted toward Allied Yugoslavia in this matter lately.'" Tito continued that "scores" of military and civilian planes flew over Yugoslavia daily.

The 21st of August was significant in the U.S.-Yugoslav dispute not only because it marked the delivery of the ultimatum, but also because of other major
developments on both sides. The wreckage of the second plane was found by Yugoslav officials approximately two miles from the Austrian border, just inside Yugoslav territory. This time, Tito allowed U.S. representatives (these were from the United States Graves Registration Commission) to go to the scene of the crash. They were allowed to search the wreckage for the bodies of the three U.S. personnel who were thought to have died in that crash. U.S. authorities at that time thought that the other two men of the crew had parachuted out and were probably being held by the Yugoslavs with the members of the crew and the passengers from the craft downed on August 9.

Although he seemed to have made a conciliatory gesture to the U.S. by reporting the finding of the wreckage and allowing U.S. representatives to see it immediately, Tito, as noted above in his speech at Jesinica, was by no means weakening in his position against the United States.

In an earlier speech (August 20, ) Tito stated: "There can be no question today of two fronts: Western and Eastern; Western countries and Eastern countries. No, the question today is one of true democracy versus reaction.... Therefore, we should be on our guard today just as all the other peoples who cherish human democratic ideas and who wish to avoid a new war and the adventures of various reactionary and imperialistic cliques should be on their guard."
With statements such as these, Tito was giving more Russian-directed doctrine, as would readily be assumed, since Yugoslavia at this time was still under a measure of Russian control. The thought of a combined Yugoslav-Soviet force in the Balkans began to disturb the U.S. and the Allies more and more. Reason for this fear was substantiated by Italian Premier Alcide de Gasperi at the Paris talks. He felt that the incidents of aggression by the Yugoslavs against U.S. aircraft and the generally hostile attitude of the Yugoslavs in northeastern Italy was "'part of a concerted Communist harassing effort to induce the United States to withdraw its troops." He added that this full-scale harassment had begun soon after Tito had returned from a visit to Moscow.

While representatives at the Paris Peace Conference formed the international opinion poll on the incidents, their influence was not as direct as that of the U.S. and Yugoslav governments themselves. On August 22, the first of the demands of the ultimatum was met by Tito's government: the passengers and crew of the C-47 forced down on August 9 were released. The Americans who had been held in a Ljubljana hotel since August 9, were sent on their way to Italy while Ambassador Patterson delivered a copy of the ultimatum to Tito. By freeing the passengers before he received the ultimatum, Tito could charge that the whole note was invalid. The Marshal at this time
also reported that he had given orders that no further planes should be shot down. In reply to a question of a New York Times correspondent, Tito said he felt that the U.S. flights over Yugoslavia were a direct infringement of the national frontier and that their purpose was "to create the impression among the Yugoslavs that the forces of the United States [were] so overwhelming that the Yugoslav Government must take everything."\(^{35}\)

Even though Tito remained caustic in his words and attitudes, the tension in Washington fell for the first time in many weeks. There was, however, much serious discussion still going on. There was talk of providing armed escorts for U.S. planes flying in the Yugoslavia area. On the afternoon of August 22, Acheson received a message from Byrnes regarding further action to be taken. The Secretary requested that Acheson meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to discuss the following points and then send a similar note to the Yugoslav Embassy. Byrnes felt that air service from Vienna to Udine, stopped since the 20th, should be resumed on August 23. Pilots should avoid Yugoslav territory in flying from Klagenfurt to Udine. Planes should be accompanied by fighter aircraft. If forced into Yugoslav territory by inclimate weather, U.S. craft were to be protected by fighters instructed to take all necessary measures.

With the matter of protection of American aircraft
settled, Washington watchers and participants, both American and foreign, went on to discuss another problem which evolved from the Yugoslav action against U.S. aircraft—that of continuation of Lend Lease and UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia. This problem was one of the major issues in the conflict between the U.S. and Yugoslavia for the next year. On August 22, however, the State Department wished to make it clear that UNRRA and Lend Lease aid were not major factors in the delivery of the U.S. ultimatum. The chief concern on Capitol Hill at this time was full compliance of the Yugoslav government with the ultimatum. The problem of UNRRA and Lend Lease aid was temporarily eclipsed.

Upon the receipt of two messages from Ambassador Patterson, the issue of the planes was all but settled. The occupants of the second plane were all dead and had been buried in Yugoslavia. Earlier reports of survivors from the craft had been erroneous. According to a note from Tito (two were contained in Patterson's notes) what eyewitnesses mistook for parachuting crewmen were actually gasoline drums wrapped in sheets. Tito went on to say that the wreckage was not, as had been claimed by the U.S. press, only a few miles from the Austrian border. He said it was fully 50 kilometers inside Yugoslavia. Also, that this plane could not possibly have been lost in bad weather. "It is notorious in the country where the
accident took place that the day was absolutely clear and of perfect visibility."

According to the State Department, upon receipt of the letters from Patterson confirming release of prisoners and halting of shooting of any aircraft, the Yugoslav government had met the demands of the U.S. ultimatum on August 24. As stated in the ultimatum of August 21, the U.S. now "determine[d] its course in the light of the evidence secured and the efforts of the Yugoslav Government to right the wrong done." No further statement was made regarding official U.S. governmental attitude until Byrnes and Connally in Paris had sent to Washington the reports of the survivors of the first plane.

The immediate crisis was over, but the larger problem was yet to be resolved. The major objectives sought in the ultimatum had been achieved. The prisoners had been released and investigations had been made of both incidents. There was still the matter of the U.N. Security Council and the payment of indemnities to the families of those killed in the second crash. The relief was only temporary, for troubled relations between the United States and Yugoslavia continued for the next three years.
Because the National Archives of the United States has not opened this section (1946-1947) to the public, there are certain pieces of information which cannot as yet be obtained for scholarly purposes. The major public official sources are *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, Vol. VI, pt. 6, *Eastern Europe: The Soviet Union*, and *The United States Department of State Bulletin*, Vols. XV and XVI (1946-1947). The major unofficial public source of consistently good information is the *New York Times*.


3. For text of note, see *Ibid*. This note also printed by Belgrade press.


8. Acting Secretary of State Acheson to Chargé in Yugoslavia (Shantz), August 13, 1946, Washington, D.C. Telegram. in *Foreign Relations, 1946*, Vol. VI, pt. 6, p. 920. It should also be noted that Chargé Shantz had protested orally to Acting Foreign Minister Velebit and
had sent two notes, along the lines of the above telegram, all without result.

10 See above, p. 29.


21Byrnes to Acheson, August 20, 1946, Paris, Telegram marked secret and urgent, in Ibid., pp. 925-926.


25See above, p. 58, n. 20 for contents of this note.

26It should be noted here that as late as August 23, the State Department still had no official report on the second incident. Neither had news come from Patterson in Belgrade as to whether or not Tito had ordered cessation of firing upon foreign aircraft and provocation of Allied troops near Trieste.


Belgrade radio reported that Tito had refused to accept the ultimatum because the airmen were already freed. See Chronology of International Events and Documents, Vol. II, NS, p. 508.


For further accounts see "Witness reports Yugoslav cheers," The New York Times, August 23, 1946, p. 3.

Yugoslav fulfillment of the U.S. ultimatum regarding the shooting down of the C-47s did ease certain tensions, but the U.S. distrust of that nation because of the incident reverberated for a good while. One of the issues not settled by the ultimatum was still a source of worry to the U.S. government and to the public: continuation of UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia. From the Paris Peace Conference, Secretary of State Byrnes gave directions for immediate U.S. action in a note to Acting Secretary of State Clayton. "I want you to do everything that we properly can to stop further shipments of supplies of any sort by UNRRA for Yugoslavia. I think you will realize the implications of an organization to which the United States contributes 73% continuing to supply a government guilty of such outrageous unfriendly conduct as Yugoslavia." In another note the following day, Byrnes "requested that the War Department be asked to halt the transfer of any ammunition whatsoever to the Yugoslavs."

Senator William F. Knowland of California had expressed worry over the idea that the U.S. might be extending loans
and other financial help to Yugoslavia along with the UNRRA aid. This, however, was not and had never been the case. All property transfers from 1945 through March, 1946 had been paid in cash by Yugoslavia. After that date the State Department refused to approve further cash sales. No final settlement had been made of the Lend Lease assistance to Yugoslavia which had totalled $32,081,778. To round out the Yugoslav debt to the U.S. through UNRRA, the following figures were quoted: Through July, 1946, UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia totalled $327,578,000 in commodities. Total aid then scheduled to go to that nation amounted to $429,500,000.

Private citizens also voiced their displeasure with the way in which assistance was being so freely given to a nation which attacked and killed U.S. aviators without provocation. William G. Williams, a 70 year old "plain American citizen" was enraged when he read a newspaper story stating that a Cincinnati firm was sending 80 ice-making machines to Yugoslavia through UNRRA. By sending telegrams to the State and Treasury Departments, the War Assets Administration and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Williams managed to hold up the shipment of the machines.

A more famous "plain citizen" also had some views on the situation. Former President Herbert Hoover, speaking in Pasadena, California, said that the United States
should stop all relief shipments to Yugoslavia until the promised free elections were held. He also stated that "the United States had furnished 75 to 80 per cent of UNRRA's food and funds, of which Yugoslavia received more than any other country." Hoover further reinforced his position with the charge that the people should not be blamed for ingratitude because they did not know of the U.S. contribution to UNRRA due to the controlled Communist press. Tito's army, which Hoover said numbered 750,000 out of a population of 14,000,000 was being supported, directly or indirectly by UNRRA. The Yugoslavian government's action was incomprehensible to him and most of the U.S. population.

Hoover's suggestion to stop the UNRRA shipments was noted by the U.S. government. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Patterson, was also reported to have made a similar statement. The American public was keenly attuned to such pronouncements and as evidence of their concern, they wrote letters to the different U.S. government departments. The State Department was deluged with mail. The Treasury Department—which acted as procurement agent for UNRRA—also received many requests to stop aid to "a government guilty of such outrageous and unfriendly conduct as Yugoslavia."

In a message to Byrnes regarding the Secretary's note to Clayton to stop UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia, Acheson
enumerated possible courses of action to accomplish this. First, because UNRRA was part of an independent international organization and the relief program for Yugoslavia was begun by the UN, the U.S. government could have requested the Central Committee of UNRRA to reconsider its aid to Yugoslavia. This, however, would not have been in line with the U.S. position that UNRRA should aid all regardless of political persuasion. Also, a request for a review of Yugoslavia could be construed as a request for punitive action—a type of move which the UN was not equipped to take. The danger involved in making such a proposal would have been that this sort of request from the U.S. would be used as propaganda by the communists that UNRRA was a U.S. political instrument.

Another line of action proposed was that the U.S. attempt to take administrative action to prevent shipments to Yugoslavia. This was considered unadvisable, however. Both Clayton and Acheson agreed that no moves should be made to stop UNRRA shipments to Yugoslavia in spite of that government's action against the U.S. If drastic action were to be taken, it was recommended that the U.S. impose economic sanctions against Yugoslavia. In essence, the secretaries stated that, for lack of any legitimate alternatives, UNRRA aid should be continued to Yugoslavia in spite of strong protests from government and citizens alike. This did not mean the end of the U.S. desire to
stop aiding the Tito government. The U.S. merely set the matter aside for a time in order to consider other events in the growing rift between Yugoslavia and the United States.

In all the furor over whether or not the Yugoslavs should continue to receive aid, the incidents which sparked the argument had been temporarily suppressed. However, on August 30, the Yugoslav Charge, Sergei Makiedo, presented a note to the Acting Secretary of State protesting the continued illegal flights over Yugoslavia and requesting that the U.S. stop these immediately. Neither plane downed in Yugoslavia on the 9th and 19th had been, according to Makiedo, in bad weather. Yugoslavia did not intend to take the blame for the deaths of the crewmen of the second craft. The Charge then went on to list the planes which had illegally crossed Yugoslav territory since the second C-47 was downed. Between August 23 and 27 he claimed 29 planes had intentionally crossed Yugoslav lines. The last part of the note was what later made Acheson refer to it as "a stinker."

The government of the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia considers that the intentional and gross offense to the sovereignty of Yugoslavia which these flights constitute cannot be borne, and asks that the American government urgently undertake the necessary steps so that in the future such flights may be prevented, since they harm good relations between the United States of America and Yugoslavia and lead to undesirable incidents.
It is unlikely that this note was prompted by Acheson's news conference of that morning announcing that the U.S. would "claim indemnities from Yugoslavia for the loss of life and damages involved in the...shooting down of American planes in that country." The amount and character of these indemnities were to be announced after all facts regarding the incidents had been determined. However, the message served as an expression of what the U.S. officials were still painfully aware—the relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia had virtually reached the breaking point.

In a trans-Atlantic teletype conference between U.S. government officials in Paris and Washington, the indemnities plan was discussed between Acheson and Byrnes. The Yugoslav government had at that time $46 million in gold frozen in the U.S., so the secretary reasoned that Tito could not refuse to pay because of lack of funds. No concrete decision was reached, however, as far as the amount was concerned. The participants in the conference discussed all phases of the Yugoslav situation to August 31, noting Makiedo's message of August 30 and the new antagonism toward the U.S. government which this note had implied. From the record of this conference, one readily receives the impression that the U.S. government officials were thoroughly angered by recent developments and undecided as to what course of action the Americans should take.
The controversy continued as Tito reported to Ambassador Patterson in Belgrade that 26 planes had flown over Yugoslav territory illegally on August 28 and 29. The Marshal requested that the U.S. government 1) give official guarantees of stopping these flights; 2) punish pilots and others responsible; 3) work out a system of signals for pilots in trouble to communicate with Yugoslav pilots and personnel on the ground. The aircraft incidents of the 9th and 19th were for the moment overshadowed by the events and reports of events growing out of the unusually tense U.S.-Yugoslav situation. At a meeting with Patterson on August 31, Tito accused the American Embassy staff of being involved in two anti-Yugoslav incidents: 1) Three U.S. soldiers were drinking in a Belgrade restaurant and suddenly one of them tore the Yugoslav flag from the wall then threw it on the floor and stamped and spit on it; 2) Yugoslav security officials had caught a group of terrorists alleged to have been working with the U.S. Embassy. Three of Patterson's staff were implicated. Patterson was totally astounded and promised immediate investigation. Also he expressed the desire that Tito's government would soon allow the people of Yugoslavia the four freedoms. Tito countered with claims that the elections that put him in power were totally free.

The meeting ended with Tito and Patterson furiously
exchanging charges of non-cooperation. Patterson in his report stated that the meeting had been intense but salutary in nature. While the accusations against the Embassy staff were puzzling, they could have been—at least this seemed possible to Patterson at the time—true. On the other hand, he also entertained the notion that Tito had fabricated these charges as a move to restore his position after the blundering fashion in which he had handled the plane incidents.

If Tito was trying to project an image of himself as the injured party in U.S.-Yugoslav relations, the plane incidents were not the only events which needed to be hidden or at least put in the background. While it could be interpreted as a U.S. move to disgrace Tito, it seems quite unlikely that the rash of anti-Yugoslav stories which the American press carried beginning in August as going through December were total fabrications, in spite of the anti-Yugoslav coverage of U.S.-Yugoslavia relations in the American press. On August 31, the New York Times printed a story which stated that 60 Americans were being held by the Yugoslavs. Several diplomatic exchanges had taken place between the U.S. and Yugoslavia over this. According to the State Department, most of those being held were Yugoslav natives who had been naturalized U.S. citizens but had returned to live in Yugoslavia during the depression. The chief American objection was that the
U.S. government had not been allowed to communicate with these persons. The situation was similar to one of fifty to sixty Americans being held in Poland at the same time. It was also uneasily reminiscent of the captivity of the passengers and crew of the first C-47 shot down over Yugoslavia earlier in the month.

There were other cases involving the illegal detention of U.S. citizens by Yugoslavia. One of the most shocking was that of Kristian Kegel. Confined in a concentration camp since 1944, he had been sold out as a slave laborer for over two years. The Yugoslav government denied this story when it was presented to them by representatives from the American Embassy. Earlier in 1946 a similar case, that of Anton Klanar, had been protested by the U.S. and the same reaction had been received. In order to rectify this sort of situation, the Department of State in an urgent plea to U.S. citizens asked that any information on American citizens known or thought to be living in Yugoslavia be sent to the U.S. government in order to help these people. The detention of these citizens in Yugoslavia was another manifestation of Yugoslav hostility toward the U.S.—a game which had become Tito's favorite pasttime.

For all his impolitic moves during the crisis of the late summer and autumn of 1946, Tito did have enough statesmanship, or common sense, to realize that he had to
bend a little in order to keep the U.S. from taking drastic measures. As indemnification for the loss of life and property involved in the plane incidents of August 9 and 19, the U.S. government was asking Yugoslavia for a lump sum of $360,000. Tito stated that he did not object to the payment of indemnities to the families of those killed because it would show Yugoslav good will and would help in Yugoslav-U.S. relations. However, he reiterated that his government would not accept responsibility for the incident nor would it pay indemnity for planes which had been over Yugoslavia illegally. Nevertheless Tito had yielded to the U.S. in the matter of some sort of payment. The Americans had not won the battle yet, for the Marshal still had to send his official note to the U.S. regarding the payment of indemnities. When this note arrived, American officials learned of Tito's conditions. He had three main points: 1) Yugoslavia would pay $30,000 in U.S. currency to the family of each man killed in the crash; 2) the total sum of $150,000 would be sent to the Department of State for distribution; 3) the Government of the Federative Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia cannot accept the claim of the Government of the United States of America to pay any compensation for the planes either damaged or destroyed over Yugoslav territory. These planes illegally flew over the Yugoslav territory and the damage was caused through the fault of the crews which did not obey the orders of the Yugoslav authorities to land.
Tito was playing correct political strategy, never giving the United States all it requested. This action marked the beginning of the close of the planes incident. It did not, however, relieve the tension between the two governments.

One issue of conflict dove-tailed with the next during the final part of 1946. On September 20, the Yugoslav Foreign Office sent a note to the American Embassy stating that the USIS reading room in Belgrade was a major cause in the worsening relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia. It claimed that the daily news bulletin put out by that organization contained articles attacking the Yugoslav government which should only be published by Yugoslav newspapers or the Yugoslav ministries. The Yugoslav government warned that if this publication was not stopped immediately, they would be forced to suspend operation of the USIS. The agency denied that the material in the bulletin or in any other publication in the reading room contained statements detrimental to Yugoslavia. The next day, September 22, the Yugoslav Foreign Office sent another note charging continued hostile campaigns against Yugoslavia. This time Yugoslavia claimed that the USIS had printed and circulated to private citizens copies of articles by former Embassy attaché Eric Pridonoff. The government stated it was withdrawing permission for USIS operation. Again the U.S. denied the Yugoslav charges.
However, the Yugoslav government was firm in its stand and the reading room was closed.

In closing down the reading room, Yugoslavia, according to Patterson, felt "it vastly more important to keep [the] people out of touch with Western democracies than to cultivate good relations with [the] U.S." The provocation for this action, as seen by a New York Times correspondent, was most probably the publication of the U.S. ultimatum in the USIS daily bulletin. Whatever the incident that triggered Yugoslav action against the USIS, the fact was that the reading room closed October 5. Acting Secretary Clayton could not see any real reason for this action. The operation of that facility and the materials which it contained seemed to him most inoffensive. The issue as he saw it was that the Yugoslav people were being denied the right to learn of other peoples and ideas. In summarizing his feelings on the matter the Secretary said: "It seems to us that without access to such information there is perhaps little hope of understanding between nations, and without such understanding it is needless to say that the patient efforts of statesmen to try to find ways and means of maintaining for all time to come the peace of the world may be greatly hampered."

Ambassador Patterson expressed the opinion that the Yugoslav action was merely one more part of a vast hostile campaign against the U.S. Shooting down American planes,
accusing Embassy Staff of spying, closing the USIS reading room, anti-U.S. and Allies press campaigns were only a portion of the trouble. Added to these acts the Yugoslav troop concentrations in Slovenia, Macedonia and Albania presented a threat of aggressive military action—possibly in Trieste—"against Western powers in conjunction with [the] Soviet Army." As far as Patterson was concerned, this situation was a more serious threat to world security than those of Spain or Greece and that the matter should be put before the UN Security Council.

Tito had something to say after the closing of USIS, also. He stated that the reading room had been a constant source of complaints. According to him the U.S. press exaggerated all incidents between the Yugoslav government and the American Embassy and served to create more ill will than cooperation. Not only that, but the American newspapers gave only the U.S. side of stories and not the "real reasons" for incidents. Tito excused the non-publication by the Yugoslav press of the exchanges over the plane incidents with the following statement: "We have different methods of acting and working. After all, it is not possible to hide [the] subject of [the] American notes from the people. Everyone listens to radio."

According to Foreign Minister Velebit, the notes simply were not as interesting as items such as reconstruction. The reading room was closed but the basic differences over
the definition of freedom and civil liberty remained between the U.S. and Yugoslavia.

From August through October problems between the U.S. and Yugoslavia were intense enough to cause well developed cases of public paranoia in both countries. The continuing flights of allied craft over Yugoslavia—as claimed by Marshal Tito—despite military action were very disturbing to the people of that country. On the other hand, the American people, constantly exposed to inflammatory press coverage of the U.S.-Yugoslav confrontations began to take virtually any anti-Allied action by Yugoslavia as an attempt to provoke a political and military showdown with the U.S. In mid-October the trial and conviction of the Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac, caused a flurry in both the U.S. and other Western countries. Acting Secretary of State Acheson spoke for countless citizens of the U.S. and other countries when he stated that the trial had been on trumped up charges and was obviously unfair. Although the trial was not directed as an affront solely to the United States—since America is not predominantly Catholic—it was a Communist act against religious organizations and therefore another of Tito's acts of opposition to anything Western.

As the year ended, most of the issues which had caused so much trouble between the U.S. and Yugoslavia
while not completely solved, were at least put aside for a time. These, like the new problems introduced, would carry into 1947 the uneasy relationship between Yugoslavia and the U.S. UNRRA aid to Yugoslavia still posed one of the American government's most difficult problems. Acting Secretary Clayton had stated in September that retaliation through UNRRA for the deaths of American airmen in Yugoslavia would be in violation of the obligations the U.S. had assumed when it became associated with the program. All emotional reasons for stopping this assistance could not outweigh the fact that if the U.S. made this move it "would place us in the position of dishonoring our international commitments." At a meeting of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy, the topic received much consideration. The Yugoslavs had charged an UNRRA engineer with espionage, but he was released after exchanges between Tito and UNRRA Director General Fiorello La Guardia, thus averting another crisis. In discussing other controversies involving UNRRA a point was brought up which had bad implications for Yugoslav activities with material furnished them through this agency. Ambassador Patterson illustrated the inadvisability of continued UNRRA assistance with the story that Yugoslavia was "laying rails furnished by UNRRA for a railroad from Belgrade to the north frontier." He felt that this action increased Yugoslavia's military potential of "openly defying the
rest of the world peace settlements." Forrestal agreed with the Ambassador. Acheson was more hesitant, and desired to discuss the matter with Byrnes. This was to him more than just a matter between Yugoslavia and the U.S.; he felt that stopping UNRRA shipments could precipitate an incident between East and West.

Trieste, the issue which already had become an incident between East and West, remained unsolved. Neither the U.S. nor Yugoslavia would yield to each other at the Paris Peace Conference. Meanwhile in Venezia Giulia the Allied forces were on constant alert against aggression by Yugoslavs across the Morgan Line. Finally, late in November, 1946, the Council of Foreign Ministers reached a substantial agreement regarding Trieste: 1) definite plans for withdrawal of troops from Trieste; 2) a reduction of occupation forces when the government went into effect; 3) direction of forces in Trieste by the governor; decision for the date of complete withdrawal to be made by him; 4) provisions for an election to be made after the governor had been in office for four months. With this agreement settlement appeared to be in the near future.

Not to be forgotten also, was the issue of Yugoslav shipping tied up by the Allies. The U.S. had kept the Yugoslav Danube barges for over a year, causing much unfavorable comment in both the U.S. and the Yugoslav
press. In November, the Yugoslav government demanded $6,750,000 from the U.S. as compensation for this holding of Yugoslav Danube shipping by the Americans.

The year came to a close, fittingly enough, with the U.S. and Yugoslavia still embroiled in the planes incidents. The U.S. was still claiming that weather had been cloudy on the days of these two crashes and that this condition had caused the planes to go off course, therefore negating Tito's claim that the crafts were illegally over Yugoslav territory. Tito continued to deny the U.S. accounts of the incidents and refused to pay any indemnities for the planes. So the problems of the U.S.-Yugoslav relationship continued on into 1947.

During the time from late 1945 to the beginning of 1947, the U.S. government and the American public had become aware that although they were a super power, victorious in a World War, they could still be hurt by a small nation with a determined leader. America's attitude toward Yugoslavia at the time she recognized that nation had been one of tolerance for a new leadership in a country almost destroyed by war. During the Trieste crisis, U.S. opinion changed to one of contempt for a communist regime which wanted so much in so short a time. The incidents involving the shooting of U.S. aircraft totally enraged the Americans. The U.S. developed an attitude of hatred toward a country which killed American airmen
for seemingly no other reason than to dare this country to retaliate. It was clear that the two systems of government and the definitions of justice which each held were totally different, showing no signs of collaboration in the near future. A period of two years would pass before the U.S. and Yugoslavia could resume a form of friendly relations.
FOOTNOTES

1 William L. Clayton, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

2 The Secretary of State to the Acting Secretary of State, Paris, August 28, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, Pt. 6, p. 930.


8 See above, p. 61.


10 The Yugoslav Chargé (Makiedo) to the Acting Secretary of State, Washington, August 30, 1946, in ibid., pp. 934-936.


13The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, August 31, 1946, in ibid., p. 942.

14The guilty man was found and was taken to Vienna for U.S. military trial. Patterson apologized to Tito via Velebit.

15The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, August 31, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, pt. 6, pp. 943-945.


18The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson), Washington, September 3, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, Pt. 6, pp. 945-946.

19The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Acting Secretary of State, Belgrade, September 6, 1946, in ibid., p. 949.

20The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, September 20, 1946, in ibid., pp. 955-956.
21. The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson), Washington, September 26, 1946, in ibid., pp. 959-960.

22. The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, September 26, 1946, in ibid., pp. 960-961.


24. The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, October 1, 1946, in Foreign Relations, 1946, Vol. VI, Pt. 6, pp. 962-963.

25. The Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Patterson) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, October 5, 1946, in ibid., pp. 965-966.


27. R. H. Markham, Tito's Imperial Communism, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947, p. 283. Markham's book is extremely conservative and while not an excellent source, it does present the U.S. reaction to the incidents from an interesting point of view.


Allied withdrawal from Venezia Giulia had been one of the stipulations of the Italian treaty. Trieste was not included in this treaty.


The Chargé in Yugoslavia (Hickok) to the Secretary of State, Belgrade, December 26, 1946, in ibid., p. 978.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

The rapid deterioration of the relations between the United States and Yugoslavia during the period under study can be blamed on a number of factors: the governmental policies, the actions and attitudes of the national leaders, American public opinion, and the East-West struggle. In order to determine the reasons for the events of 1945 to 1947 a closer look should be taken at the participants in their various roles.

At the end of World War II the United States and the Soviet Union were the major figures involved in the beginning of the cold war. World politics was then in the first stage of a political relationship configuration termed bipolarity. Bipolarity in simple terms meant that there was only one real issue in the world—the cold war struggle between Washington and Moscow. All controversies within the world community assumed importance only in the way in which they related to one of these powers. It was in the period of 1945-1950 that the Soviet Union and the United States were at their peak as supreme powers and the bipolarity theory worked the best. Since this span encompasses the events of 1945-1947 it is important
as background for studying the actions of the Americans and the Yugoslavs.

During this time of the cold war, America addressed herself to a "Europe first" style of foreign policy. The U.S. had taken on the role of world leadership and in this position she was determined to meet and fight with all political weapons at her disposal the Soviet threat to central and eastern Europe. This area was at that time particularly unsteady and vulnerable. The people were demoralized and still suffering from the shocks of World War II. In most cases a major portion of the nation's population had been killed or disabled during the war. The land was virtually razed, making the beginnings of new agriculture and industry a dull necessity. New forms of government had taken over swiftly at the end of the war, so quickly in fact that the regimes were in place while the people were still in a bewildered state of transition. America felt it her duty and responsibility to protect these people as best she could from becoming pawns of the Soviet Union. It was out of this feeling, this fear of further westward movement by the Soviets, that the United States developed her stiff stand against the expansion of Yugoslavia over the entire Istrian peninsula. Yugoslavia was communist and to the U.S. policy makers of the day, communist meant Soviet and Yugoslav control meant eventual Russian control of the
disputed area.

With the American point of view on the issues of eastern Europe in general and Trieste in particular in mind, the position of the U.S.S.R. should next be examined. By geography alone, the Soviet Union had a much greater interest in the developments concerning this area. The U.S.S.R.'s true relation to the problem, however, was greatly colored by its relationship with Yugoslavia. In the postwar world, the Soviet Union was, as many claimed then and now, carving out spheres of influences for herself. Those nations bordering on the U.S.S.R. were prime targets for take-over at the end of the war. This was swiftly accomplished by the Red army occupation forces and the concessions given to the Soviet Union at the international conferences during and after the war. Yugoslavia, however, did not border on the Soviet Union and was therefore at an advantage when she began her fight for nationalistic communism under the leadership of Marshal Tito. The new Yugoslav government was also unlike other communist governments in eastern Europe because it came to power through independent revolution. It had very little Soviet assistance and no military occupation. The Yugoslav communists were quite certain of the help of Russia at the beginning of the new government, but as time passed and Tito got more independent of the Stalinist party lines, Soviet support became less of a reliable thing.
The disapproving attitude of the Soviets toward Tito's freelance style of communism became quite apparent during the course of the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers. Here, in the international spotlight, the U.S.S.R. in action was an excellent vignette of bipolar politics. She was keeping one eye on the West—the United States and Great Britain in particular—and the other on Yugoslavia all during the Trieste controversy. The Soviet Union could ill afford at this time to frighten the West by supporting all eastern European countries in their demands. She therefore could not go the whole route with Yugoslavia on the Trieste question and force the West to give in to the demand that the entire Istrian peninsula be given over to the Tito government. Even though Molotov did second the motion that Yugoslavia should have this area, the Soviet government eventually went over to the side of the Allies and voted in the compromise French Line solution.

Although this move was most probably a great shock to the Yugoslavs, it was to have been expected in view of the status of Soviet-Yugoslav relations. Their outward professions of harmony and friendship were probably more for the benefit of the West and the Soviet satellite nations. The actual situation was one of Soviet disapproval that Yugoslavia should have taken matters into her own hands to such a great degree. Tito had not asked
for counsel with the communist government in Moscow in launching this campaign just as he had not asked for their help in setting up his own government or running it. The Soviet refusal to back Yugoslav demands on Trieste can then be seen as a form of punishment for Tito in the hope that this sort of dramatic action would scare and humiliate the Yugoslav government back into the Soviet fold and back from nationalistic communism to the party line which came from Moscow.

The Soviet Union and the United States, then, while both concerned with the Yugoslavs and their demands, actually seemed more interested in what moves each could make that would keep the other from becoming frightened and taking drastic action. Yugoslavia, however, was playing bipolar politics in a half-hearted way. She was working for her own advantage and sought to achieve her goals by using either the U.S.S.R. or the United States, whichever served her purpose best. If Yugoslavia could gain the Istrian peninsula she would have accomplished a great feat, politically and geographically. As for the land area itself, Yugoslavia claimed it as rightly hers because of the population. She stated that the portions of the population which were not Slav were in sympathy with the Yugoslav claim to the area, and therefore she was only trying to please the people. If she possessed Trieste, Yugoslavia would also have a good harbor for
international shipping. This would greatly benefit her economy in the near future.

In her struggle to have this area, Yugoslavia did not confine her efforts to diplomatic arguments at the Paris Conference. She also backed her words with military action or at least enough of a threat of violence to keep the Allied occupation forces in Venezia Giulia guessing. While Yugoslavia was busy trying to convince the nations that she should have the area in dispute, she was also carrying on a barrage of anti-U.S. propaganda. The United States could be more profitably challenged than could the U.S.S.R. for several reasons. At this time, the U.S. was the stable power in an otherwise chaotic world community. Undamaged by war—in the sense that her economy had not been destroyed—her industries were intact and she had the ability to support millions in the devastated areas of Europe. And she was doing exactly that—rebuilding Europe—through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The U.S. supplied almost 75% of all material and economic assistance distributed through that agency, and a substantial portion of these goods went to Yugoslavia. The Tito government reasoned that if they could in some way, whether it be over the Istrian controversy or some other questionable matter, defeat the U.S. and damage her prestige, she could gain new importance in the communist world and
reassert her independence of the councils of the Soviet Union. So it was that Yugoslavia, a nation desirous of gaining importance, in spite of the Soviet-U.S. dominated framework of world politics, chose the United States as her chief adversary. If she could humiliate that power she would be beating the Russians at their own game and proving that a communist nation could exist by putting nationalist goals first and not being tied to the rules from Moscow. It is in the light of these ideas that the Yugoslav shooting of U.S. aircraft in August, 1946, should be viewed.

Since these incidents were of prime importance in the rift between the U.S. and Yugoslavia during the late 1940's, they deserve special attention. To recapitulate briefly, the planes were downed over Yugoslav territory on August 9 and August 19, 1946. The first incident, on August 9, was the forcing down of a C-47 near Ljubljana. The plane was destroyed but the passengers and crew escaped severe harm. Yugoslav officials took them and held them incommunicado for a time without benefit of representation by the U.S. government. The second incident occurred on August 19. This time, according to Yugoslav accounts, a C-47 exploded in mid-air as it was being chased back from the frontier by Yugoslav fighters over Bled. The plane was a total loss and the five crewmen aboard were killed.
In order to see the significance of these incidents in the relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia in 1946 and early 1947, certain questions must first be answered. As far as the matter of who was really to blame is concerned, both countries must shoulder certain parts of that burden. First of all, what were the planes doing over Yugoslavia? According to statements issued by the United States government, these aircraft had been on EATS (European Air Transport Service) runs from Klagenfurt, Austria, to Udine, Italy, and from Vienna to Udine. The intrusion into Yugoslav air space was, stated the American sources, not at all intentional. The aircraft flown by Captain William Crombie on August 9 encountered bad weather in the Alps and was as a result forced off course. Visibility was impossible and so the plane was flown by instruments. The pilot did not realize he was over Yugoslav territory until it was too late. As far as the second plane was concerned, the reasons for its being in the dangerous northwestern corner of Yugoslavia were reported to have been the same as those given by the pilot of the first craft. Earlier flights on that same day passing near the area in question reported extremely bad weather in the Alps region. So, the U.S. position as to why the planes were in Yugoslavia in the first place was that the weather had simply forced them off course.

Tito had other ideas as to the reason for the presence
of U.S. aircraft in Yugoslavia. He believed that they were spying. This argument, however, does not stand up very well. If the United States were spying, a more discreet craft would have been chosen for such a mission. A C-47 is a very large transport plane. It is low-flying (about 9,000' is average) and is very slow when compared with other planes of the same type. It is very obvious and can be seen easily from the ground. But Tito realized this also, and did not offer other concrete reasons to the U.S. and the other Allies as to why he found the presence of these planes over his country so aggravating. It was true that had a U.S. aircraft flown over Yugoslavia deliberately, it would have been in violation of international law. The U.S. at that time had no reciprocal air agreements with Yugoslavia and therefore had no way to defend the presence of these planes over that country except with the excuse that the planes had been forced off their original flight plans and were therefore not to be held responsible.

Along with this same line of thought, it should be pointed out that the terrain of the northwest corner of Yugoslavia is quite rugged and mountainous, with its mountain ranges eventually blending into the Alps. Flying in any mountainous area is dangerous and unpredictable enough because of strong drafts and air currents. Add to these natural dangers the surprise of being pursued by
armed fighter planes and the position of the crews of the planes—confusion and fear—can easily be imagined. Their mistake was in allowing themselves to be caught over Yugoslavia. So it can be assumed that the U.S. craft were over Yugoslavia not for a specific purpose but because of inclimate weather.

The second question to be answered is that of why Tito took such drastic action against these American planes. They obviously represented no threat to Yugoslav security, even though Tito claimed that the opposite was true. They were of no military threat, being unarmed cargo planes. Technically, however, they were breaking international law by invading Yugoslav air space even if only by accident. These factors alone do not seem to be sufficient provocation to warrant the chasing of the planes and forcing them to crash-land or be shot down by Yugoslav fighter crafts. The Marshal had been claiming that planes had been illegally flying over Yugoslavia since early 1946 and had been continuing to do so even after the incidents of August 9 and 19. He justified his action in part by stating that his orders were designed to warn other planes not to continue violating Yugoslav territory. Assuming that Tito's charges were true, however, the Yugoslav action was a normal response. Numerous allied planes continually violating a country's air space despite warnings of retaliation might easily provoke
a military response, especially in an atmosphere as tense as that found in Yugoslavia in 1946.

If Tito's charges of constant illegal air traffic were not true, then the two instances of the downing of U.S. craft were political moves. Viewed in this light, perhaps the most important factor in Tito's decision to order the shooting of these planes was that they were American. Here was the chance he had been waiting for.

By these hostile acts Tito's Yugoslavia was showing its contempt for the great Western power. It was not Yugoslavia backed by the Soviet Union, but Yugoslavia alone.

That this act was a colossal and impolitic blunder was quickly seen by the Soviets. While they were glad to see communists in action against the West, the irrational action of Tito made them fear that he might go too far and arouse the U.S. to the point of armed conflict. This attitude was reflected at Paris when Molotov warned Kardelj that to shoot down any more planes would be a mistake.

American reaction to the incidents was a combination of rage and bewilderment. Officially, Washington could see no reason—outside of the fact that the planes had been over Yugoslav territory accidentally—for this sudden aggression against the U.S. by a country with which she had until that time considered herself friendly. The confusion caused by the first event had barely become
ordered when the second incident occurred. Aside from the strangeness of being attacked for no valid reason, another factor which caused trouble for the policy makers was that this event could not be dealt with along classical political lines. That is to say, in this instance there was no major power with which to contend. The enemy was not the other super power but a nation which was struggling to keep from becoming aligned. There was no precedent to follow in dealing with this or any country outside the regular world power structure.

This uncertainty as to what to do was also shared by Yugoslavia. The Tito government was equally unsure of the proper course to take now that they had made this drastic move against the U.S. The U.S., however, had an overwhelming advantage over Yugoslavia from the outset. As an experienced nation, used to dealing with crises and emergencies, the U.S. had a ready network of government workers who could be put to the task of investigating, gathering information and evaluating official and unofficial reports concerning the entire situation. The whole system could be and was mobilized at a moment's notice.

Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was under the leadership of a new and inexperienced government. Although she did possess the classical government set-up with its network of attachés, consuls, ambassadors, etc., these
people were not yet secure in the handling of crises for the Yugoslav government. This is not to say, however, that Tito did not have some very capable people. His diplomatic corps had in it some very valuable men with practicable knowledge of the West and how to deal with it—i.e., Vladimir Velebit and Ambassador Leontich. Also, at the Paris Conference was Tito's able friend and adviser Edvard Kardelj, a man of excellent background and with the ability to handle people very skilfully. Not to be forgotten of course was Tito himself. When all was said and done he remained the leader, the chief policy maker and the true head of the Yugoslav government.

The difference in the characters of the two governments—the U.S. machine style politics and Tito's personal politics—formed one of the difficulties in the solution of the planes incident and other problems in U.S.-Yugoslav relations. When the United States delivered the ultimatum to the Yugoslav government it was backed by the entire U.S. government and people. When Yugoslavia replied or otherwise acknowledged the American charges, the feeling was that this was Tito's reply or Tito's action. Here one could speculate that if Tito's regime and these incidents had come at a time when Franklin D. Roosevelt had been President, the two leaders could have played personal politics and quite possibly have solved the problems between the two countries. As it was Tito was dealing
with a new administration which was not as open as Roosevelt's nor as willing to put up with the uncalled-for actions of a seemingly errant Soviet satellite leader.

Another motivating factor behind U.S. moves was public opinion. This weighed quite heavily upon the decision makers in Washington and caused much discussion among them regarding the proper solution of the planes incident and the reevaluation of U.S. attitudes toward Yugoslavia after a satisfactory agreement had been achieved. It was public opinion which forced the U.S. leaders to deliver the ultimatum after the second plane had been shot down. Whether the U.S. government would have actually reached the point of feeling an ultimatum to be the only alternative to retaliation is open to speculation. This much is known, however, that the idea had been discussed in top government circles and the ultimatum would have had a good chance even without the mass public support which it received. Throughout the entire time from August, 1946 on into 1947 when the planes issue was finally solved, public opinion had kept the U.S. government at work for a fast and fair resolution of the conflict. This was one of the factors upon which Tito had not counted when he made his decision to order the shooting down of the planes. Not only did he manage to get American public opinion against him, he virtually alienated the entire
West. The people of the U.S. were well aware of all the aid which had been given Yugoslavia through UNRRA and they were not about to forgive and forget the strange way in which the Yugoslav government repaid the U.S. for its benevolences.

The U.S. request for indemnification for the planes lost and the men killed in the second incident was virtually the final issue involved as far as the planes incident was concerned. To this time, American-Yugoslav exchanges regarding the resolution of the conflict of these events had been on a give and take basis. And so they continued. Each time the Yugoslav government made a concession to the U.S., she managed also to refuse part of the demand. This was only shrewd political strategy and if, as it seems, it was designed to keep the U.S. in an aroused state, it was working perfectly. Considering the increasingly emotional complexion which the Yugoslav-U.S. exchanges began to take on during the months of attempting to settle all problems connected with the events of August 9 and 19, the conclusion seemed almost dull. This is not to say that the solution finally reached was an amicable one. It was simply the only way in which the conflict could have been resolved, given the sharp increase in the hostile feelings between the United States and Yugoslav governments and peoples.
It seemed, however, as though the U.S. had led the Yugoslav government to each step toward the end of the issue. The stronger and more experienced leadership of the U.S. was able to maneuver Tito into positions where he had to compromise his hatred and give in to his overpowering opponent. Despite his determination to win this struggle against the U.S. as a sign of Yugoslav independence and maturity, Tito simply was not yet ready to take on a world power which was so unalterably opposed to him and his methods as was the U.S.

The incidents of August 9 and 19 then, served as the springboard to worsening relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia. The Americans and the Yugoslavs had gone through a learning experience which supplied them with opinion and political ammunition for the next two years. No longer was the situation of super power versus newly established, small government with a communist leadership a strange phenomenon to either nation. It was now accepted by the U.S. leadership that another pattern for international relations had emerged. She could no longer concentrate with all her power upon the bipolarized situation. It was beginning to break. New methods were to be developed to deal with the new nations of reawakening postwar Europe.

With her attitude toward Yugoslavia firmly entrenched as one of aggravated association, the U.S. went on to face
other crises which that country's leadership precipitated for the remainder of 1946. The Yugoslav accusation against American Embassy staff members—that some of them were in fact leaders in a spy ring—was almost too much for the American Ambassador to bear. However, by that time the U.S. had learned that this sort of thing was to be expected from Tito and that it simply had to be endured until lengthy investigation by the U.S. and Yugoslav authorities alike would hopefully prove such allegations false.

This is not to say that during the course of 1946 the U.S. relationship with Yugoslavia was nothing but one of the U.S. playing martyr to the whims of the Yugoslav government. Certainly there were some slip-ups along the way by the American government. The issue in this vein which gained the most attention was the holding of the Yugoslav Danube barges for so long a time. This was an act which the U.S. should never have allowed to occur. It was valuable in the tense period under study because it served to remind the U.S. that she too had some faults in this relationship.

In other issues in 1946, however, there was an alternate intensification and easing of the strain between Yugoslavia and the U.S. One of the periods of intensification was the closing of the USIS reading room in Belgrade. On this issue the American government slipped back
into her pre-August role of champion of the West against the forces of Eastern communism. Here the U.S. was defending a principle. She desired for the people of Yugoslavia a right to see the U.S. news and to learn the viewpoints of other systems of ideology than communism. At the least sign of anti-Yugoslav news, Tito felt compelled to close down the source of this anti-regime literature. He claimed that many felt it was detrimental to healthful relations between the U.S. and Yugoslavia—if indeed such relations had truly ever existed.

The fact that the Yugoslav government seemed to find the presence of this reading room so offensive, when she let other reading rooms such as those of Great Britain and France remain open, was evidence of the Tito policy of never letting the Americans have any sort of representation (outside of the regular government officials) in Yugoslavia. If he did not want U.S. planes in the skies over Yugoslavia he certainly had no desire to have their newspapers and government publications in the capital city of his country. The act itself was rude and hostile and once again, impolitic on the part of Tito.

Beneath the controlled rage of the political and diplomatic exchanges between the two governments was an uneasy undercurrent. This was the UNRRA aid question. The assistance which Tito received through this program was unbelievable in its quantity and value. This was an
instance in which Tito did not mind the token presence of the U.S. in his country at all. As a matter of fact, UNRRA was, whether it realized this or not, indirectly supporting Tito's army with these vast shipments of food and supplies, as well as feeding the Yugoslav population.

In the U.S. the fight to withdraw UNRRA aid from Yugoslavia ranged from the Secretary of State to the American Ambassador in Yugoslavia to the average citizen. To most Americans the idea of feeding and clothing that country and supplying her with materials for reconstruction was beyond the realm of charity and international obligation. It was absurd. However, the U.S. government won the battle in the end. She would not withdraw aid from UNRRA to deprive Yugoslavia because this would mean that the U.S. would be violating the oath which bound her to the UN and UNRRA. Here the government leaders were making sure that they could not be accused of dishonoring a pledge made for the world community. America was remaining true to the old school of political ideas—a nation without honor or self esteem did not deserve the respect of the other nations.

With the end of 1946 came the end of a new era of confrontation for the U.S. and Yugoslavia. The issue of the relations between these two nations had been an unusual part of the overall world picture in that time. The Yugoslavs had defined a position for themselves in
the world community. They had set a goal of establishing
the nationalist Yugoslav state as a workable form of
communism and in achieving this gave the countries of the
Soviet bloc ideas of loosening themselves from total
Moscow control. Tito had tested the great super power of
the United States and had won a few of the battles against
her.

For the United States the period of confrontation
with Yugoslavia had disproven the bipolar theory of
politics. The actions of aggression made against her by
the government of Yugoslavia did not fit the pattern of
a U.S. vs. Soviet Union cold war. Clearly there was
another element emerging in international relations with
which the U.S. would have to learn to deal. This did not
mean that the cold war was secondary. It would remain
the primary preoccupation of the American government
until it ended in the 1960s.

For the Soviet Union the period of confrontation
between Yugoslavia and the United States had been important
because she saw in this conflict the drive for independence
which Marshal Tito had. The Soviets enjoyed his antics--
and this they considered the acts of this man--for a
time because they liked to see the West, the U.S. in par-
ticular, humiliated by communist action. However, the
bold moves which the Marshal made in 1946 marked the
beginning of his downfall in Soviet eyes. He and his
ideas were a threat to the maintenance of the Soviet satellite system. This fear and anger would later be articulated by Stalin, when, enraged by Tito's unwillingness to comply with Soviet demands he claimed, "'I will shake my little finger--and there will be no more Tito.'"

Nevertheless, Tito was an established power. Yugoslavia, independent of the Soviet Union, was going her own route in the world community.

The significance of the deteriorating relations between the United States and Yugoslavia from late 1945 to 1947 lay in the fact that during this process, the courses of three nations were changed. An unsteady new nation gained the confidence it require to make the break from a would-be parent government. The Western super power learned that the era of classical politics had come to an end and now all nations had to be dealt with as powers. And, finally, the Eastern power learned that her hopes for a great east European empire of satellites was not to be fulfilled because of the nationalistic trend in communism spurred along by Marshal Tito. Although the shooting of the U.S. planes by Yugoslavs in August, 1946 is not the most noted of incidents in the early cold war years, it is important for the forces it set in motion--forces which served to restructure power relationships within a bipolar world.
FOOTNOTES


3 See Chapter 1, p. 12.


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