

FROM TITO'S YUGOSLAVIA TO THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC: A HISTORY OF DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC, MILITARY, AND NON-ALIGNED-MOVEMENT-MEDIATED RELATIONS BETWEEN SERBIA AND VENEZUELA (1950-2026)

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Abstract: Serbia and Venezuela maintain one of the oldest formally established relationships between Southeast Europe and Latin America — dating, by the Serbian foreign ministry's own record, to 13 April 1882 — yet no dedicated peer-reviewed study of the dyad exists in any language, a gap this review both documents and begins to fill (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; Simić, 2024). The aim of the article is to reconstruct the diplomatic, economic, military, and Non-Aligned-Movement-mediated history of the relationship across 1950–2026 and to explain its paradoxical structure: a bilateral trade of only 594,000 euros in 2025 coexisting with high-visibility political alignment — Venezuela's steadfast non-recognition of Kosovo, Belgrade's continued dealings with the Maduro government through the 2019 dual-presidency crisis, and a Venezuelan ministerial presence at the movement's sixtieth-anniversary commemoration hosted by Serbia in October 2021 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; Visoka, 2024; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021). The research applies a structured review methodology: a corpus of 60 peer-reviewed studies published 2019–2026, verified item by item, is synthesized with a documentary base of treaties, declarations, and archival records, and organized through a five-channel periodization of the relationship. The original contribution of the article is the concept of legacy-mediated alignment — an interstate alignment sustained by inherited multilateral capital and reciprocal sovereignty norms rather than by material exchange — operationalized in a five-period, five-channel Bilateral Alignment Matrix whose every cell is documentarily anchored. Key findings: the relationship's intensity peaks coincide exclusively with Non-Aligned institutional moments — 1961, 1976, 1989, and 2021 — rather than with bilateral economic or military interest; the economic and military channels never developed beyond framework agreements, with no major-conventional-weapons transfers registered in either direction across the entire window (SIPRI, 2025); and the post-2008 alignment rests on a reciprocal non-recognition exchange — Kosovo for the Venezuelan opposition's interim presidency — that functions as mutual sovereignty insurance between two states contesting external verdicts on their statehood questions (Newman & Visoka, 2023; Ahlborn, 2025). The framework is transferable to other post-socialist–Global South dyads sustained by non-aligned memory.

Keywords: *Serbia, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Non-Aligned Movement, diplomatic history, Kosovo, recognition, legacy-mediated alignment.*

INTRODUCTION

In October 2021 the foreign minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Félix Plasencia, traveled to Belgrade for the high-level commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement — an event Serbia hosted for more than one hundred delegations on the site of the movement's founding conference — and signed, in the margins, a memorandum on agricultural cooperation with a state whose annual trade with his own amounted to a rounding error: 594,000 euros in the most recent recorded year (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). The episode condenses the puzzle this review addresses. Serbia and Venezuela are separated by nine thousand kilometers, exchange almost nothing, and station no resident ambassadors in each other's capitals — Belgrade covers Caracas from Havana — yet they behave, at chosen moments, like close political partners: Venezuela has never recognized Kosovo and belongs to the hard core of Belgrade's counter-recognition coalition (Visoka, 2024; Newman & Visoka, 2023), while Serbia continued dealing with the government of Nicolás Maduro throughout the 2019 crisis in which some sixty states recognized a rival president (Hasar, 2025; Ahlborn, 2025; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026).

The relationship's documentary skeleton spans three states on the Serbian side — the Kingdom of Serbia, socialist Yugoslavia, and the contemporary republic — and two political orders on the Venezuelan side. Formal relations date to 13 April 1882; the operative treaty base consists of a cultural-scientific cooperation agreement of 1977, a trade agreement of 1988, a memorandum on political consultations of 2010, a diplomatic-passport visa waiver of 2011, and the 2021 agricultural memorandum (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

the Republic of Serbia, 2026). Around this thin bilateral skeleton, however, runs a thick multilateral history: socialist Yugoslavia built one of the most systematic Latin American policies of any European state (Cosovschi, 2021; Katkova, 2023), the Non-Aligned Movement it co-founded in Belgrade in 1961 eventually drew Venezuela into full membership, and the movement's memory remains a working instrument of Serbian foreign policy, deployed by every post-Yugoslav administration and culminating in the 2021 Belgrade commemoration (Firdaus et al., 2026; Bogetić, 2021; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021).

The scholarship, by contrast, is nearly silent. The recent historiographical wave on Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned world — a rich 2019–2026 literature spanning diplomatic, economic, military, cultural, and memory dimensions (Spaskovska et al., 2021; Cosovschi, 2025; Čavoški, 2022; Lazić, 2021) — treats Latin America increasingly seriously, but its dyadic studies cover Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba, never Venezuela (Simić, 2021; Simić, 2024; Cosovschi, 2021; Calori, 2026). The contemporary literature on Serbia's foreign policy analyzes its balancing among great powers without registering its Latin American micro-alignments (Vuksanović, 2023; Belloni, 2024; Radelić & Özşahin, 2023), and the literature on Venezuelan foreign policy maps Caracas's non-Western outreach without noticing Belgrade (Boersner-Herrera, 2026; Acuña, 2025; Dominguez, 2024). A systematic search conducted for this review across Crossref, regional repositories, and the specialized bibliographies found no peer-reviewed article in English, Serbian, Croatian, Spanish, or Russian devoted to the Yugoslav–Venezuelan or Serbian–Venezuelan dyad — an absence that is itself a finding, and the review's warrant.

The article addresses three research questions, formulated as reviewable hypotheses. The first hypothesis (H1) holds that the

relationship is structurally legacy-mediated: its documented intensity peaks coincide with Non-Aligned institutional moments — 1961, 1976, 1989, 2021 — rather than with any bilateral economic or military conjuncture. The second hypothesis (H2) holds that the relationship exhibits systematic channel asymmetry: the diplomatic and multilateral channels are persistently active while the economic and military channels never developed beyond framework agreements — a “thin alignment” in which political intimacy rests on almost no material base. The third hypothesis (H3) holds that the post-2008 phase of the relationship is organized by normative reciprocity: Venezuela's non-recognition of Kosovo and Serbia's non-recognition of the Venezuelan opposition's interim presidency constitute a reciprocal sovereignty-insurance exchange, each state supplying the other the recognition good it most needs (Newman & Visoka, 2023; Visoka, 2025; Ahlborn, 2025).

The original contribution of this article lies in the concept of legacy-mediated alignment — an alignment between states sustained by inherited multilateral capital, institutional memory, and reciprocal sovereignty norms rather than by trade, investment, security cooperation, or geographic proximity — and in its operationalization through a five-period, five-channel Bilateral Alignment Matrix (diplomatic, economic, military, multilateral, normative) whose cells are anchored to verified documentary and scholarly sources. Unlike the alignment concepts developed for materially grounded partnerships (Locoman & Papa, 2022; Vuksanović, 2025), legacy-mediated alignment names a configuration the literature has not conceptualized: a relationship whose substance is memory and whose currency is recognition. The review is also, to the author's knowledge, the first systematic scholarly reconstruction of this dyad in any language.

The article proceeds in six parts. The literature review organizes four bodies of scholarship and the methodology specifies

the corpus, the documentary base, and the construction of the matrix. The research results present the periodization, the documented milestone chronology, and the matrix. Four analytical sections follow: the socialist-era relationship within Yugoslavia's Latin American policy (1950–1991); the rupture and refounding of the relationship (1992–2012); the Bolivarian-era symbolic alignment (2013–2026); and the military channel across all eras together with the theoretical yield of the case. The conclusion returns to the hypotheses, states limitations, and sets a research agenda.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Four bodies of scholarship frame the reconstruction, and their configuration — three rich walls around an empty center — defines the review's task.

The first body is the new historiography of Yugoslav non-alignment, which has transformed the field since 2019. Its diplomatic wing has reconstructed Yugoslavia's Latin American opening in the early Cold War — a systematic outreach to governments and left-wing movements that made Belgrade “a serious factor” in the region by the early 1960s, propelled by non-alignment's appeal as an alternative to the Soviet model (Cosovschi, 2021); the Yugoslav–Cuban contest over the very definition of non-alignment, from the Cuban revolution through the 1961 Belgrade conference (Cosovschi, 2025) to the Havana showdown of 1979 and the leaderless crisis that followed Tito's death (Čavoški, 2024; Čavoški, 2021); and the movement's economic program, from Yugoslav sponsorship of the New International Economic Order (Čavoški, 2022) to the oil-power rifts that the 1970s energy shocks opened between the movement's producers and consumers — the fault line on which OPEC founder Venezuela

and oil-importing Yugoslavia stood on opposite sides (Spaskovska, 2021). The regional survey literature now includes a dedicated treatment of Yugoslavia's relations with Latin America across the 1960s–1980s, covering political, economic, cultural, and educational interaction with Venezuela among the cases (Katkova, 2023), and dyadic studies of Chile and Uruguay demonstrate both the method and the gap: diplomacy, trade, and emigration reconstructed archivally for other South American partners, never for Caracas (Simić, 2021; Simić, 2024). The economic wing has reconstructed the non-aligned business world of Yugoslav self-managed enterprises — Energoinvest, Pelagonija, and their peers as principal exporters linking the Global South to both blocs (Spaskovska & Calori, 2021), with the construction giant Energoprojekt as the emblem of engineering internationalism (Sekulić, 2023) and Cuban–Yugoslav economic entanglement as the closest studied Latin American analogue (Calori, 2026). The military wing established Yugoslavia as an “arsenal of the Global South” whose military aid, training, and arms transfers ran from Algeria in the 1950s to the state's demise (Lazić, 2021), with the MPLA case documenting the scale Belgrade could mobilize for a favored movement (Čavoški, 2019). The cultural and societal wings mapped filmed diplomacy accompanying Tito's voyages (Turajlić, 2021), commercialized educational aid (Wright, 2021), women's internationalism (Bonfiglioli, 2021), municipal diplomacy (Unkovski-Korica, 2022), and veterans' internationalism as memory work (Đureinović, 2024) — together a five-channel anatomy of how Yugoslavia related to the non-aligned world, which this review turns on a single dyad. The historiographical self-critique warning against Yugocentrism in NAM studies (Stubbs, 2021) is taken as a methodological caution throughout.

The second body concerns contemporary Serbian foreign policy. Its central theme is balancing: Serbia as the Western Balkans'

pivotal hedger, engaging Russia, China, and other non-Western powers while formally pursuing EU accession (Vuksanović, 2023), refusing alignment with EU sanctions on Russia while voting for the UN resolutions condemning the invasion — a posture explained through vicarious identity and ontological security (Belloni, 2024) — and proving resistant to EU leverage through the war years (Radeljić & Özşahin, 2023). The Kosovo attachment that anchors this posture has been theorized psychoanalytically as an identity investment that outweighs material calculation (Ejdus & Vulović, 2025). Directly relevant to this review is the demonstration that Non-Aligned memory is an operative instrument of this foreign policy: successive presidents of ideologically different stripes — Tadić, Nikolić, Vučić — have mobilized the collective memory of the movement as diplomatic capital toward the Global South, a path-dependent practice culminating in the 2021 Belgrade commemoration (Firdaus et al., 2026; Bogetić, 2021; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021). The recognition literature completes this body: Kosovo's contested statehood has become a laboratory of geopoliticized recognition (Newman & Visoka, 2023), Serbia's derecognition campaign of 2017–2020 claimed eighteen withdrawals of recognition (Visoka, 2025), the practice of derecognition has received its first book-length treatment with Serbia's campaign as a central case (Visoka, 2024), and Kosovo's adaptive counter-diplomacy has been theorized as protean power (Visoka & Brajšori, 2025).

The third body concerns Venezuelan foreign policy and the crisis of its international standing. The Bolivarian project's regional integration diplomacy under Chávez and its contraction under Maduro are now systematically compared (Acuña, 2025), the role of experts and loyalty in the regime's foreign-policy machinery documented (Boersner-Herrera, 2026), and the multipolar self-conception of Caracas's partnerships articulated in

the literature on its Chinese, Russian, and ALBA relationships (Dominguez, 2024; Kosevich, 2023; Bull & Rosales, 2026; Baião & Saramago, 2024; de Bhal, 2019). The 2019 dual-presidency crisis generated a legal-political literature directly relevant to H3: the recognition of governments as an instrument contested between effectiveness and legitimacy (Hasar, 2025), the fragmented practice of representation in international organizations during the Guaidó–Maduro credentials battles (Ahlborn, 2025), the legitimation politics of the combined sanctions regimes (Palestini, 2023), and the survival of the regime under them (Corrales, 2020; Burgess & Corrales, 2024; Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Buxton, 2020). The external-patronage literature — Russia's symbolic hemisphere-reach (Kosevich, 2023; Thoene et al., 2023; Vuksanović, 2025), the skeptical assessment of autocracy promotion (Palestini et al., 2025; Gratius, 2022), and the mass emigration that reshaped the state's societal base (Weitzman & Huss, 2024; Congressional Research Service, 2025) — establishes the crisis context in which Caracas values every remaining friend, Belgrade included.

The fourth body is the contemporary non-alignment debate, which connects the historical and current halves of the review. The concept of active non-alignment, developed in and for Latin America as a Global South response to great-power rivalry (Heine, 2024) and already applied to the region's Venezuela diplomacy (Gonçalves, 2026), shows the movement's vocabulary returning to policy currency at both ends of the dyad — in a Latin America rediscovering equidistance and in a Serbia that never stopped invoking it (Firdaus et al., 2026; Heine, 2024). The defense-studies literature supplies the comparative benchmarks for the military channel: the export orientation and economic multipliers of the Western Balkan defense industries (Risojević, 2024), Europe's post-2022 reindustrialization (Knežević, 2025), small-state doctrinal history (Zielińska,

2025), civil–military trajectories in the region (Saar, 2025; Angelov, 2025), and the informational dimension of Balkan alignments (Bilić, 2025), while the documentary record of Venezuela's actual armament — the Russian-Chinese procurement of 2005–2013 and its decay — is established in the institutional literature (Rouvinski, 2019; Herbst & Marczak, 2019; IISS, 2025; Seelke et al., 2022; SIPRI, 2025).

At the intersection of these four bodies stands the empty center: no study of the dyad. The review's task is therefore not synthesis of an existing literature but its construction — assembling the dyad's history from regional surveys, adjacent dyads, documentary sources, and the two national literatures that have never met.

Research Methodology

The research applies a structured review methodology organized in three components.

The first component is corpus assembly. Peer-reviewed studies published between January 2019 and 2026 were identified through systematic searches of Crossref, publisher databases, regional repositories (doiSerbia, Hrčak, SciELO, Redalyc), and specialized bibliographies of non-alignment studies, in English, Serbian, Croatian, Spanish, and Russian, using search families combining “Yugoslavia”/“Serbia” with “Venezuela”, “Latin America”, “Non-Aligned”, “Tito”, and channel-specific terms, together with contemporary searches on Serbian foreign policy, Kosovo recognition, and the Venezuelan crisis. Inclusion required peer-reviewed publication in 2019 or later, verifiable bibliographic identity — every DOI resolved and checked against the Crossref registry during assembly — and substantive bearing on at least one channel of the dyad's history or its interpretive context. The final corpus comprises 60 peer-reviewed studies. The systematic search also established, as a negative

result reported in the findings, that no dedicated peer-reviewed treatment of the dyad exists.

The second component is the documentary base, necessary because a dyad without a literature must be reconstructed from records. Eleven institutional and documentary sources anchor the chronology: the Serbian foreign ministry's official record of bilateral relations and treaties (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026); the Serbian government's record of the 2021 Belgrade commemoration (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021); the declaration of the 1961 Belgrade founding conference, used as a primary historical source under the review's documented exception for such materials (Non-Aligned Movement, 1961); the United States diplomatic record of the mid-1970s exchange of visits, likewise a primary source collection (U.S. Department of State, 2014); the institutional literature on Venezuelan armament and the crisis (Rouvinski, 2019; Herbst & Marczak, 2019; IISS, 2025; Seelke et al., 2022; Congressional Research Service, 2025); and the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, queried for the military channel (SIPRI, 2025). Two documentary items predate 2019; both are primary historical sources admitted under the explicit exception for such documents, constituting 3% of the bibliography, and are flagged in the verification log.

The third component is the construction of the periodization and the matrix. The relationship's history is divided into five periods — 1950–1961 (postwar restoration and Yugoslavia's Latin American opening), 1961–1980 (the Non-Aligned apogee), 1980–1991 (late-socialist maturation and Venezuela's accession to the movement), 1992–2012 (rupture, refounding, and the Kosovo pivot), and 2013–2026 (Bolivarian-era symbolic alignment) — with boundaries set by system-level breaks on either side rather than by bilateral events, precisely because H1 predicts that bilateral intensity is derivative of multilateral conjunctures. Within each period, five

channels are assessed: diplomatic (missions, visits, consultations), economic (trade, investment, enterprise activity), military (transfers, training, defense diplomacy), multilateral (joint activity within the NAM and other institutions), and normative (mutual positions on each other's sovereignty questions). Each channel-period cell of the resulting Bilateral Alignment Matrix is assigned a qualitative intensity — high, moderate, low, or none — anchored to the documentary or scholarly source that attests it; cells for which no source attests activity are coded “none,” and the coding is therefore falsifiable by any document that surfaces. The matrix follows the structured-instrument tradition of the author's previous work in this series but remains deliberately qualitative: a first reconstruction's contribution is the organized evidence itself.

Three limitations of design are acknowledged at the outset and elaborated in the conclusion: the reconstruction rests on published and official sources without new archival research, so the socialist-era cells inherit the coverage limits of the regional surveys; the 2019 publication threshold excludes the older historiography except as carried in the reviewed studies; and the negative finding — no dedicated literature — is bounded by the languages and databases searched.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The review generated three blocks of results: the documented milestone chronology, the periodization with its channel structure, and the negative and quantitative findings that bear on the hypotheses.

The chronology is presented in Table 1. Its most consequential property is visible at a glance: of the thirteen documented bilateral milestones across 144 years, every clustering falls on a Non-Aligned institutional conjuncture. The relationship's formal treaty base was built in the movement's high period — the 1977 cultural-scientific agreement in the

immediate aftermath of the mid-1970s exchange of state-visit invitations documented in the US diplomatic record (U.S. Department of State, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026), the 1988 trade agreement on the eve of the movement's ninth summit in Belgrade (Bogetić, 2021). The post-Yugoslav instruments cluster identically: the 2010 political-consultations memorandum and 2011 visa waiver in

the years of Serbia's Global South re-engagement, and the 2021 agricultural memorandum signed during the sixtieth-anniversary commemoration itself, on the occasion of the only documented Venezuelan ministerial visit to Belgrade of the contemporary era (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021; Firdaus et al., 2026).

Year	Event	Channel	Source
1882	Establishment of relations (Kingdom of Serbia)	diplomatic	(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
1950s	Yugoslavia's systematic Latin American opening	diplomatic	(Cosovschi, 2021; Katkova, 2023)
1961	Belgrade founding conference; Venezuela not present (three Latin American observers: Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador)	multilateral	(Non-Aligned Movement, 1961)
1975–1976	Exchange of state-visit invitations; Tito's Latin American tour includes Caracas	diplomatic	(U.S. Department of State, 2014; Katkova, 2023)
1977	Agreement on cultural, scientific and technical cooperation	diplomatic	(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
1988	Trade agreement	economic	(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
1989	Ninth NAM summit, Belgrade; Venezuela enters full membership	multilateral	(Bogetić, 2021)
2008	Venezuela declines to recognize Kosovo	normative	(Visoka, 2024; Newman & Visoka, 2023)
2010	Memorandum on political consultations	diplomatic	(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
2011	Diplomatic-passport visa waiver	diplomatic	(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
2019	Belgrade maintains relations with the Maduro government through the dual-presidency crisis	normative	(Ahlborn, 2025; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
2021	NAM 60th-anniversary commemoration, Belgrade; FM Plasencia visit; agricultural memorandum	multilateral	(Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
2025	Recorded bilateral trade: EUR 594,000	economic	(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)

Table 1. Documented milestones of Serbian(Yugoslav)–Venezuelan relations, 1882–2026
Source: author's compilation from the cited references.

The periodization and channel structure are presented in Table 2, the review's organizing result. Three of its properties constitute the core findings. First, the multilateral channel is the only channel coded high in more than one period, and every diplomatic-channel peak is adjacent to a multilateral peak — the pattern predicted by H1. Second, the

economic and military channels never rise above low in any period: the 1988 trade agreement produced no documented trade expansion, no Yugoslav enterprise project in Venezuela comparable to the documented engineering presence elsewhere in the non-aligned world appears in the enterprise historiography (Spaskovska & Calori, 2021;

Sekulić, 2023), and the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database records no transfer of major conventional weapons between Belgrade and Caracas in either direction across the entire observation window (SIPRI, 2025) — the pattern predicted by H2. Third, the normative channel, absent for the first four decades,

becomes the relationship's load-bearing element after 2008: Venezuela's Kosovo non-recognition and Belgrade's government-recognition restraint in 2019 form the reciprocal exchange predicted by H3 (Visoka, 2024; Ahlborn, 2025; Newman & Visoka, 2023).

Channel	1950–1961	1961–1980	1980–1991	1992–2012	2013–2026
Diplomatic	low (Covschi, 2021)	high — visits, 1977 agreement (U.S. Department of State, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)	moderate (Katkova, 2023)	low; 2010–2011 instruments (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)	moderate — 2021 visit (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)
Economic	none documented	low (Katkova, 2023)	low — 1988 agreement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)	none documented	low — EUR 594,000 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026)
Military	none documented	none documented (SIPRI, 2025)	none documented (SIPRI, 2025)	none documented (SIPRI, 2025)	none documented (SIPRI, 2025)
Multilateral (NAM)	low — Venezuela absent 1961 (Non-Aligned Movement, 1961)	moderate — observer era (Katkova, 2023)	high — 1989 accession at Belgrade summit (Bogetić, 2021)	Low — Serbia observer (Firdaus et al., 2026)	high — NAM60 Belgrade (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021)
Normative	none	none	none	high — Kosovo 2008 (Visoka, 2024)	high — reciprocal non-recognition (Ahlborn, 2025; Visoka, 2025)

Table 2. *Bilateral Alignment Matrix: Serbia(Yugoslavia)–Venezuela, five periods × five channels (author's coding; every cell anchored). Source: author's coding of the documentary and scholarly record; "none documented" cells are falsifiable by any source that surfaces.*

The theoretical placement of legacy-mediated alignment among neighboring concepts belongs with the results because the concept is itself the review's product. It differs from alliance in lacking any security commitment or capability aggregation — the two states share no threat assessment and no defense channel (SIPRI, 2025; Locoman & Papa, 2022). It differs from strategic

partnership, the register of Venezuela's Russian and Chinese relationships, in lacking the material programs those partnerships bundle (Kosevich, 2023; Dominguez, 2024; Bull & Rosales, 2026). It differs from hedging, Serbia's master strategy, in being one instrument within a hedging portfolio rather than the strategy itself (Vuksanović, 2023; Belloni, 2024). And it differs from mere diplomatic

friendliness in having a specific, reciprocal, high-value exchange at its core — the mutual non-recognition support that both sides treat as consequential (Visoka, 2024; Ahlborn, 2025). Its two necessary conditions, derived from the case, are inheritance — a stock of shared institutional history that lowers the transaction costs of alignment to near zero — and normative complementarity — sovereignty needs that each side can service by inaction, the cheapest currency in international politics (Firdaus et al., 2026; Newman & Visoka, 2023). Where only the first condition holds, the result is commemorative friendship without exchange; where only the second, transactional recognition-trading without depth; where both, the durable, thin, spike-patterned alignment the matrix displays (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021; Visoka, 2025).

The negative and quantitative findings complete the results. The systematic multi-language search found no dedicated peer-reviewed study of the dyad — the dyadic historiography of Yugoslav–Latin American relations covers Chile (Simić, 2021), Uruguay (Simić, 2024), Cuba (Calori, 2026; Cosovschi, 2025), and Mexico and Brazil in the survey literature (Katkova, 2023; Cosovschi, 2021), while Venezuela appears only inside regional treatments. The asymmetry of the two states' documentation is itself informative: the relationship's entire modern treaty base and trade record are published by the Serbian side (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026), while the Venezuelan record must be triangulated from the crisis literature (Corrales, 2020; Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Congressional Research Service, 2025). Quantitatively, the contrast between channels is stark: Venezuela's arms imports in the Bolivarian era ran to approximately eleven billion dollars from Russia alone (Seelke et al., 2022; Rouvinski, 2019; Herbst & Marczak, 2019), while the Serbia–Venezuela military channel registers zero in the same database that documents those flows (SIPRI, 2025);

Venezuela's trade with China ran to tens of billions in the loans-for-oil era (Bull & Rosales, 2026; Dominguez, 2024), while trade with Serbia in 2025 was 594,000 euros (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). The alignment the two states perform — at the NAM, on Kosovo, on the crisis of 2019 — is thus sustained on a material base four to five orders of magnitude thinner than the partnerships it publicly resembles, which is the empirical signature of legacy-mediated alignment and the quantitative form of the review's central claim.

THE SOCIALIST ERA: VENEZUELA IN YUGOSLAVIA'S LATIN AMERICAN POLICY, 1950–1991

The socialist-era relationship is best reconstructed from the outside in: from Yugoslavia's regional policy, within which Venezuela occupied a specific and revealing position — always inside the horizon, never at the center.

Yugoslavia's Latin American opening of the 1950s was systematic and early. Expelled from the Soviet bloc and searching for international space, Belgrade built relations with Latin American governments and left-wing movements on the appeal of a socialism independent of Moscow, and by the early 1960s had made itself a serious factor in a region Washington considered its backyard (Cosovschi, 2021). The regional survey literature documents the instruments — diplomacy, trade missions, cultural and educational exchange — deployed across the continent in the 1960s–1980s (Katkova, 2023), and the dyadic studies show their typical rhythm in the Southern Cone: rupture and restoration with Chile at mid-century (Simić, 2021), diplomacy-trade-emigration bundles with Uruguay (Simić, 2024). Venezuela entered this policy on its least ideological terms. A founding member of OPEC governed through the period by anti-communist democratic pacts, it offered Belgrade neither a

revolutionary partner nor a socialist market, but it possessed what the movement's economic program made increasingly central: oil power, and the willingness to use producer sovereignty against the established order — the agenda whose non-aligned career the NIEO literature reconstructs (Spaskovska, 2021; Čavoški, 2022).

The relationship's documented peak follows exactly this logic. The mid-1970s were the moment when the non-aligned economic program and Venezuelan petro-nationalism converged: Caracas nationalized its oil industry, championed producer power, and looked for extra-hemispheric partners, while Yugoslavia led the NIEO campaign and toured the Global South in its cause (Čavoški, 2022; Spaskovska, 2021). The US diplomatic record documents the resulting choreography — President Carlos Andrés Pérez holding a Yugoslav invitation among his 1975 travel options (U.S. Department of State, 2014) — and Tito's 1976 Latin American tour, accompanied as always by the filmed-diplomacy apparatus that turned voyages into narrative (Turajlić, 2021; Katkova, 2023), brought the eighty-three-year-old president to Caracas. The 1977 cultural-scientific-technical agreement institutionalized the moment (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). That the peak was multilaterally scripted is confirmed by what it did not produce: no enterprise implantation comparable to Energoprojekt's or Energoinvest's documented positions elsewhere in the non-aligned world (Sekulić, 2023; Spaskovska & Calori, 2021), no military relationship despite Yugoslavia's simultaneous career as arsenal of the Global South (Lazić, 2021), and no trade expansion the survey literature found worth recording (Katkova, 2023).

The channels that did carry socialist-era substance deserve enumeration precisely because Venezuela is absent from each, and the absences are informative. The enterprise channel was the most developed instrument of Yugoslav presence in the non-aligned

world: self-managed exporters operated across three continents, with the construction and engineering giants building dams, ports, and capitals from West Africa to the Middle East (Spaskovska & Calori, 2021; Sekulić, 2023) — yet the enterprise historiography records no Venezuelan implantation, plausibly because Venezuelan infrastructure procurement of the oil decades was dollar-denominated and Western-contracted, leaving no niche for barter-friendly Yugoslav bidders (Sekulić, 2023; Katkova, 2023). The educational channel brought Global South students to Yugoslav universities by the thousands under progressively commercialized aid arrangements (Wright, 2021), and the cultural channel projected the voyages and the movement through the newsreel apparatus (Turajlić, 2021) — both channels touched Venezuela only within regional programming, without the dedicated bilateral schemes documented for closer partners (Katkova, 2023). Sub-state channels — the municipal internationalism of town twinning (Unkovski-Korica, 2022), the women's-organization diplomacy (Bonfiglioli, 2021), the veterans' internationalism (Đureinović, 2024) — likewise show no documented Venezuelan node. The one channel where Venezuela's profile exceeded its bilateral weight was the ideological-multilateral: as OPEC co-founder and later as democratic critic of bloc politics, Venezuela mattered to the non-aligned economic agenda well before it joined the movement (Spaskovska, 2021; Čavoški, 2022) — which is exactly the configuration H1 predicts for a legacy-mediated dyad: presence in the multilateral frame, absence in the bilateral channels.

The 1980s completed the pattern in both directions. The movement Yugoslavia struggled to hold together after Tito's death — through the Havana radicalization, the leadership vacuum, and the return to founding principles at New Delhi (Čavoški, 2024; Čavoški, 2021) — became, paradoxically, more attractive to a Venezuela whose debt

crisis was souring its hemispheric alignment; the trade agreement of 1988 and Venezuela's accession to full membership at the ninth summit in Belgrade in 1989 mark the convergence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; Bogetić, 2021). The accession is the socialist era's final irony: Venezuela joined the movement at the exact Belgrade summit that proved to be Yugoslavia's last as host, two years before the state's dissolution — entering the club as its founder was leaving history (Bogetić, 2021; Firdaus et al., 2026). For the matrix, the era codes as H1 predicts: every elevation of the bilateral channels sits on a multilateral conjuncture — the NIEO decade, the Belgrade summit — and no bilateral channel ever moved on its own.

RUPTURE AND REFOUNDING: FROM DISSOLUTION TO THE KO- SOVO PIVOT, 1992–2012

The second period inverted the relationship's terms: the Yugoslav side lost the multilateral standing that had carried the dyad, and when the relationship re-formed it did so around a new element — the normative channel — that would come to define it.

The rupture was structural on the Serbian side. The dissolution severed Belgrade from the movement it had founded: the rump state's international isolation in the 1990s removed it from non-aligned diplomacy, and the successor republic returned to the movement only as an observer, trading membership for memory (Firdaus et al., 2026; Bogetić, 2021). The historiographical literature on how post-Yugoslav societies process the internationalist inheritance — veterans' transnational memory work (Đureinović, 2024), the Yugocentrism debate (Stubbs, 2021) — describes the ground on which Serbian diplomacy would later rebuild: non-alignment as usable past rather than living framework. On the Venezuelan side the same decade ran the opposite direction: the Bolivarian revolution from 1999 revived

precisely the vocabulary — anti-imperialism, South–South solidarity, producer sovereignty — that the 1970s dyad had shared, and rebuilt Venezuelan foreign policy around integration projects and non-Western partnerships (Acuña, 2025; Buxton, 2020; Baião & Saramago, 2024). The two states thus crossed in opposite directions through the same ideological space, and their instruments met again in the late 2000s: the 2010 memorandum on political consultations and the 2011 visa waiver are the documentary trace of the re-encounter (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026).

The 1990s rupture also severed the societal micro-channels through which distant dyads ordinarily persist. Yugoslav emigration had seeded communities across Latin America — the dyadic studies document the emigration bundle explicitly for the Southern Cone (Simić, 2024) — and Venezuela's post-war boom had drawn its share of Yugoslav emigrants; but the successor states' consular fragmentation divided that diaspora into national communities attached to Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana separately, and no successor state built a dedicated diaspora policy toward Venezuela of the kind the comparative literature documents for small states with concentrated emigrant populations (Simić, 2024; Firdaus et al., 2026). The Venezuelan crisis would later reverse the migratory direction entirely — eight million Venezuelans leaving, including descendants of the European postwar wave (Weitzman & Huss, 2024) — so that by the 2020s the societal channel, like the economic one, ran at a level indistinguishable from zero. This matters analytically: the standard thickeners of dyadic relations — diaspora lobbies, business councils, sister cities — are all absent here, which is why the relationship's persistence must be explained by the state-level mechanisms the review's concept names, and cannot be attributed to societal demand (Unkovski-Korica, 2022; Firdaus et al., 2026).

The pivot event, however, was normative, and it came from Pristina, not from either capital. Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence converted recognition into the organizing question of Serbian foreign policy and created, overnight, a new currency in which distant states could be valuable to Belgrade: the withheld recognition (Newman & Visoka, 2023; Ejodus & Vulović, 2025). Venezuela paid in that currency immediately and has never stopped: it belongs to the durable core of non-recognizers on which Serbia's counter-recognition diplomacy rests, alongside the great-power patrons whose Security Council positions anchor the campaign (Visoka, 2024; Newman & Visoka, 2023). The derecognition literature documents what Belgrade built on this base in the following decade — a systematic campaign that claimed eighteen withdrawals of recognition by 2020, making Serbia the most active practitioner of derecognition diplomacy in the contemporary system (Visoka, 2025; Visoka, 2024). For the Bolivarian government, the position cost nothing material and expressed everything doctrinal: territorial integrity against Western-sponsored secession is a first principle of a state whose own region contains a US-aligned secessionist precedent it fears, and whose foreign policy defines itself against exactly the coalition that sponsored Kosovo's independence (Acuña, 2025; Dominguez, 2024; Romero's era analyzed in Boersner-Herrera, 2026). The normative channel thus opened as a genuine exchange of like for like — sovereignty support for sovereignty support — and H3's reciprocity begins here, five years before the period that would test it.

The refounding's texture matters for the concept this review proposes. Nothing material was rebuilt: trade remained negligible, no resident embassies returned, no enterprise or defense relationship followed the memorandum (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; SIPRI, 2025). What was rebuilt was a relationship of positions — seats, votes, recognitions, invocations of

shared history — conducted through the multilateral and normative channels almost exclusively. The contemporary Serbian foreign-policy literature explains why this suited Belgrade: a hedging state accumulating support points across all azimuths values cheap, symbolically legible alignments (Vuksanović, 2023; Belloni, 2024), and the NAM-memory instrument gave it a ready-made register in which to conduct them (Firdaus et al., 2026). The Venezuelan crisis literature explains why it suited Caracas: a government under escalating external pressure values every state that keeps recognizing it, almost regardless of size (Corrales, 2020; Palestini, 2023). The stage was set for the third period, in which both logics intensified to their limits.

THE BOLIVARIAN-ERA SYMBOLIC ALIGNMENT, 2013–2026: RECOGNITION RECIPROCITY AND THE ECONOMY OF ALMOST NOTHING

The contemporary period is the review's analytical core, because it displays legacy-mediated alignment in its purest documented form: maximal political visibility on minimal material base.

The Venezuelan side of the period is defined by collapse and contestation. The economy lost more than 80% of its GDP between 2013 and 2020 in a collapse whose drivers and possible pathways generated a dedicated research program (Congressional Research Service, 2025; Bull & Rosales, 2020); nearly eight million people left; the 2018 election was rejected by much of the hemisphere; and in January 2019 an opposition interim presidency was recognized by some sixty states in the largest coordinated recognition-of-government action of the modern era (Congressional Research Service, 2025; Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Hasar, 2025; Weitzman & Huss, 2024). The recognition battle ran through international organizations in fragmented, forum-by-forum practice — Maduro's delegates retained the UN General

Assembly seat while the OAS and the Inter-American Development Bank accredited the opposition's (Ahlborn, 2025) — and through the legitimization contest around the sanctions regimes (Palestini, 2023). In this environment, every state's stance became a legible signal, and Belgrade's was unambiguous in practice: Serbia continued dealing with the Maduro government throughout, a position whose documentary record is the ministry's own bilateral chronology culminating in the 2021 ministerial visit (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021). Read against the recognition literature, Belgrade's restraint was the mirror image of Caracas's Kosovo position — a withheld recognition of equal and opposite kind, completing the reciprocal exchange that H3 names (Hasar, 2025; Visoka, 2024; Newman & Visoka, 2023).

The Serbian side of the period is defined by the maturation of memory diplomacy. The path-dependent mobilization of Non-Aligned memory by every Serbian administration reached its institutional peak in the sixtieth-anniversary commemoration of October 2021: more than one hundred delegations at the Belgrade Fair, the movement's founding site, hosted by an observer state performing its founder's inheritance (Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021; Firdaus et al., 2026; Bogetić, 2021). The commemoration's bilateral yield for the dyad was the only Venezuelan ministerial visit of the era and the agricultural memorandum signed in its margins — the fifth framework instrument of a treaty base that has never carried commensurate substance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). The wider foreign-policy literature places the event precisely: for a hedging Serbia, the Global South register diversifies dependence and advertises autonomy (Vuksanović, 2023; Belloni, 2024; Radeljić & Özşahin, 2023); for the derecognition campaign, the same register mobilizes the constituency in which

Kosovo's recognitions are contested (Visoka, 2025; Visoka & Brajšhori, 2025); and the revival of non-alignment as active non-alignment in Latin America itself (Heine, 2024; Gonçalves, 2026) gives the vocabulary contemporary currency at the dyad's other end.

The multilateral choreography of the period rewards close reading, because it shows both sides performing the alignment for third audiences. Serbia's NAM revival is not bilateral policy toward any single member but portfolio policy toward the constituency: the observer state that hosts the anniversary, invokes the founding, and addresses the movement's forums is accumulating diffuse goodwill convertible in specific arenas — above all the recognition arena, where Global South votes decide Kosovo's institutional fate (Firdaus et al., 2026; Visoka & Brajšhori, 2025; Bogetić, 2021). Venezuela's participation performs a different conversion: for a government whose regional standing collapsed with ALBA's common horizon (Baião & Sarago, 2024; Acuña, 2025) and whose recognition was contested in hemispheric bodies (Ahlborn, 2025), the movement's forums are among the remaining stages on which it appears as a normal state among a hundred others — the diplomatic equivalent of the survival goods its greater patrons supply materially (Corrales, 2020; Gratiús, 2022; Palestini et al., 2025). The active-non-alignment turn in Latin American foreign-policy debates adds a forward-looking layer: as the region rediscovers equidistance vocabulary under great-power competition (Heine, 2024; Gonçalves, 2026), the historical NAM franchise that Serbia performs and Venezuela inhabits acquires renewed regional legibility — a convergence of vocabularies that costs neither state anything and flatters both (Firdaus et al., 2026; Heine, 2024). In the matrix, this is why the period's multilateral cell codes high while every material cell stays low: the alignment's theater is real, and its stage is the movement's memory.

The economy of the period is the finding that disciplines interpretation. Trade of 594,000 euros; non-resident diplomatic coverage; one ministerial visit in a decade; five framework agreements across fifty years (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). Set against the partnerships this alignment publicly resembles — Venezuela's eleven-billion-dollar Russian armament, its tens of billions in Chinese finance (Seelke et al., 2022; Bull & Rosales, 2026; Kosevich, 2023) — the Serbian relationship is materially invisible, and set against Serbia's own hedging portfolio it is the cheapest line item: no energy dependence, no investment exposure, no security entanglement (Vuksanović, 2023; Belloni, 2024). Yet it delivers, at near-zero cost to each side, the good each most values in its hardest file — for Belgrade a reliable non-recognizer of Kosovo inside the Global South constituency (Visoka, 2024), for Caracas a European capital that never joined the recognition coalition against it (Ahlborn, 2025; Palestini, 2023). This is the exchange structure that distinguishes legacy-mediated alignment from mere friendliness: the goods traded are normative, the transaction costs are absorbed by inherited institutions and memory, and the relationship's observable intensity therefore tracks the calendar of those institutions — 1961, 1976, 1989, 2021 — rather than any bilateral fundamentals (Firdaus et al., 2026; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021). H1 and H3, in this reading, are two faces of one mechanism.

THE MILITARY CHANNEL ACROSS ERAS: THE ARSENAL THAT NEVER TRADED, AND WHAT ITS ABSENCE PROVES

A review written for a defense-studies readership owes the military channel separate treatment — and in this dyad the channel's analytical value lies precisely in its documented emptiness, which is neither trivial nor accidental.

The emptiness is doubly surprising against the two national records. Socialist Yugoslavia was an arms exporter of the first rank among non-aligned states: its military aid, training missions, and transfers ran from the Algerian revolution to the state's end, functioning as an extension of Yugoslav revolutionary internationalism and a pillar of its Global South standing (Lazić, 2021), with documented programs of political and material assistance at liberation-movement scale (Čavoški, 2019). Bolivarian Venezuela, for its part, became the hemisphere's largest arms importer of the early twenty-first century, absorbing approximately eleven billion dollars of Russian systems and a Chinese secondary line between 2005 and 2013 (Seelke et al., 2022; Rouvinski, 2019; Herbst & Marczak, 2019; IISS, 2025). Two states with such profiles — one a seller with non-aligned credentials, the other a buyer explicitly diversifying away from Western suppliers — would seem natural partners; the Serbian defense industry's contemporary export orientation, whose macroeconomic significance for the Western Balkans is empirically established (Risojević, 2024), only sharpens the expectation. Yet the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database records no major-conventional-weapons transfer between Belgrade and Caracas in either direction, in any period (SIPRI, 2025).

The absence has period-specific explanations that the review's framework organizes. In the socialist era, Yugoslavia's military internationalism followed ideological affinity — liberation movements and revolutionary states (Lazić, 2021; Čavoški, 2019) — and pre-Bolivarian Venezuela, an anti-communist pact democracy armed by Washington, was structurally outside the clientele; the dyad's 1970s convergence was petro-economic and multilateral, not strategic (Spaskovska, 2021; Katkova, 2023). In the Bolivarian era the explanation inverts: Venezuela now sought exactly the non-Western supplier Serbia had become, but the channel was preempted on both sides — Caracas's procurement was

locked into the Russian credit-and-systems package whose scale and financing no small producer could match, inside a bilateral relationship whose domestic and international determinants the area literature has mapped in detail (Rouvinski, 2019; Herbst & Marczak, 2019; Kosevich, 2023; Boersner Herrera & Haluani, 2023), while Serbia's defense-export economy was oriented toward solvent markets and constrained by its EU-accession balancing, for which a sanctioned Venezuelan defense relationship would have been the costliest possible signal (Risojević, 2024; Vuksanović, 2023; Belloni, 2024; Radeljić & Özşahin, 2023). The comparative literature completes the picture: Venezuela's arsenal decayed for want of the sustainment its supplier relationship could not survive (IISS, 2025; Seelke et al., 2022), Europe's defense industries reoriented to the continent's own rearmament (Knežević, 2025), and small-state defense engagement follows doctrinal and institutional path dependencies — of which the region's civil–military trajectories (Saar, 2025; Angelov, 2025), doctrinal histories (Zielińska, 2025), and informational vulnerabilities (Bilić, 2025) are the operative Balkan forms — none of which pointed toward Caracas.

The channel's emptiness must also be measured against what both defense establishments were doing instead, because the counterfactual traffic ran heavy on both sides. Venezuela's Bolivarian procurement built a complete high-end inventory — combat aircraft, strategic air defense, armor, small arms at mass scale — through the Russian package, with Chinese trainers and vehicles in the second line, and then watched it decay as financing, maintenance, and supplier commitment collapsed after 2014 (Rouvinski, 2019; Herbst & Marczak, 2019; IISS, 2025; Seelke et al., 2022). Serbia's defense industry, over the same contemporary window, rebuilt an export profile whose measurable contribution to the small Western Balkan economies the empirical literature establishes

(Risojević, 2024), inside a European demand environment transformed by the post-2022 reindustrialization wave — more than seventy new facilities and two hundred thousand defense-sector jobs on the continent (Knežević, 2025). Neither current touched the other at any documented point: no Serbian system in the Venezuelan inventory, no Venezuelan order in the Serbian export record, no joint exercise, commission, or attaché accreditation surfaced by any source consulted (SIPRI, 2025; IISS, 2025; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). The comparative civil–military literature suggests one further, structural inhibitor: the two defense establishments inhabit opposite institutional worlds — one shaped by two decades of professionalization pressure within and alongside NATO frameworks (Saar, 2025; Angelov, 2025), the other politicized into a regime pillar (Corrales, 2020; Burgess & Corrales, 2024) — and defense cooperation across that institutional divide carries reputational prices that a hedging, EU-candidate Serbia demonstrably declines to pay elsewhere (Belloni, 2024; Radeljić & Özşahin, 2023; Vuksanović, 2023).

For the review's theory, the empty military channel is the decisive test that legacy-mediated alignment passes. A materially grounded alignment of this political visibility would show defense traces — transfers, training, exercises, at minimum defense-attaché presence; their complete absence, alongside a normative channel operating at maximum intensity, demonstrates that the alignment's substance genuinely lies where the concept locates it: in memory and recognition, not in capability or commerce (SIPRI, 2025; Visoka, 2024; Firdaus et al., 2026). The channel also defines the relationship's contingent future. Should the political economy of either side shift — a post-crisis Venezuelan reconstruction seeking diversified suppliers for exactly the rebuilding its decayed arsenal requires (IISS, 2025; Congressional Research Service, 2025), or a Serbian defense industry

seeking markets beyond a saturated European demand cycle (Risojević, 2024; Knežević, 2025) — the dyad possesses, in its five framework agreements and its NAM-mediated familiarity, precisely the low-cost diplomatic infrastructure through which such a channel could open quickly. The matrix's empty row, in other words, is not a prediction of permanent emptiness but a measure of the alignment's present nature — and a baseline against which any future militarization of the relationship will be exactly measurable (SIPRI, 2025; Lazić, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The review set out to reconstruct the history of Serbian–Venezuelan relations across 1950–2026 and to test three hypotheses about its structure.

The first hypothesis, that the relationship is legacy-mediated — its intensity peaks coinciding with Non-Aligned institutional moments rather than bilateral conjunctures — is confirmed by the chronology and the matrix. Every documented elevation of the dyad sits on a multilateral event: the 1961 founding conference that defined the space, the mid-1970s NIEO convergence that produced the visits and the 1977 agreement, the 1989 Belgrade summit at which Venezuela entered the movement, and the 2021 Belgrade commemoration that produced the era's only ministerial visit (Non-Aligned Movement, 1961; U.S. Department of State, 2014; Bogetić, 2021; Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2021; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026). No bilateral channel ever moved independently of this calendar.

The second hypothesis, of systematic channel asymmetry, is confirmed quantitatively. The diplomatic and multilateral channels generated five framework agreements and sustained political contact across three Serbian state formations; the economic channel peaked at 594,000 euros of annual trade; the military channel registers zero across the

entire window in the same database that documents Venezuela's eleven-billion-dollar armament from other suppliers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; SIPRI, 2025; Seelke et al., 2022). The alignment is real and thin at once — which is precisely the configuration the concept names.

The third hypothesis, of post-2008 normative reciprocity, is confirmed in the review's terms. Venezuela's unbroken non-recognition of Kosovo and Serbia's maintained relations with the Maduro government through the recognition crisis of 2019 constitute an exchange of the scarcest good each state's sovereignty file requires, documented on the Kosovo side in the recognition and derecognition literature (Visoka, 2024; Visoka, 2025; Newman & Visoka, 2023) and on the Venezuelan side in the legal-institutional record of the crisis (Ahlborn, 2025; Hasar, 2025; Palestini, 2023). The reciprocity is structural, not sentimental: it survives changes of government context on both sides because each party's need is anchored in its deepest foreign-policy attachment (Ejdus & Vulović, 2025; Corrales, 2020).

The principal original contribution of this article is the concept of legacy-mediated alignment and its operationalization in the five-period, five-channel Bilateral Alignment Matrix — together with the first systematic scholarly reconstruction of the Serbian–Venezuelan dyad in any language, and the documented negative finding that no dedicated peer-reviewed study of the dyad previously existed. The concept names a configuration the alignment literature lacks: relationships whose substance is inherited multilateral capital and reciprocal sovereignty norms, whose costs are near zero, and whose observable rhythm follows commemorative rather than material calendars. Candidate comparative cases — Serbia's dyads with Algeria, Egypt, or Indonesia; Cuba's with the post-Yugoslav space — are specified by the same criteria.

The limitations of the review are four-fold. First, it rests on published and official sources; the Yugoslav, Serbian, and Venezuelan archives for this dyad remain unworked, and the socialist-era cells of the matrix inherit the coverage of regional surveys rather than dedicated research. Second, the documentary base is asymmetric — the treaty and trade record is published by Belgrade, with no equivalent Venezuelan series located. Third, the corpus's 2019 threshold admits the older historiography only as mediated by current scholarship, with two pre-2019 primary documents included under a documented exception. Fourth, the negative finding of no dedicated literature is bounded by the five languages and the databases searched.

Future research should proceed on three lines: archival reconstruction of the dyad's socialist era — the 1976 visit, the 1977 and 1988 agreements, and any enterprise or military-diplomatic contacts the surveys missed — for which the Simić dyadic model provides the template (Simić, 2021; Simić, 2024); a systematic mapping of Serbia's Latin American micro-alignments as a set, testing whether the

legacy-mediated pattern generalizes across the region (Firdaus et al., 2026; Heine, 2024); and monitoring of the two contingencies the matrix identifies as capable of thickening the relationship — Venezuelan reconstruction procurement and Serbian defense-export diversification (IISS, 2025; Risojević, 2024). For policy, the implications are symmetrical. For Belgrade, the dyad demonstrates both the efficiency and the ceiling of memory diplomacy: recognition support of high value obtained at near-zero cost, but no material relationship to fall back on should the normative exchange lose its object (Visoka, 2025; Vuksanović, 2023). For any post-crisis government in Caracas, the dyad is a standing option: a European capital with framework agreements already in force, no sanctions history against it, and a defense industry seeking markets — the rare relationship whose entire infrastructure is built and whose content remains to be chosen (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2026; Risojević, 2024; Congressional Research Service, 2025).

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OD TITOVE JUGOSLAVIJE DO BOLIVARSKE REPUBLIKE: ISTORIЈAT DIPLOMATSKIH, EKONOMSKIH, VOJNIH I POKRETOM NESVRSTANIH POSREDOVANIH ODNOSA SRBIJE I VENECUELE (1950–2026)

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Sažetak: Srbija i Venecuela održavaju jedan od najstarijih formalno uspostavljenih odnosa između jugoistočne Evrope i Latinske Amerike — koji, prema evidenciji srpskog ministarstva spoljnih poslova, datira od 13. aprila 1882. godine — a ipak ne postoji nijedna posvećena recenzirana studija ove dijade na bilo kom jeziku; ovaj pregledni članak tu prazninu i dokumentuje i počinje da popunjava. Cilj članka je da rekonstruiše diplomatsku, ekonomsku, vojnu i Pokretom nesvrstanih posredovanu istoriju odnosa u periodu 1950–2026. i da objasni njegovu paradoksalnu strukturu: bilateralnu trgovinu od svega 594.000 evra u 2025. godini koja koegzistira sa politički vidljivim savezništvom — venecuelanskim doslednim nepriznavanjem Kosova, kontinuiranim odnosima Beograda sa Madurovom vladom kroz krizu dvojnog predsedništva 2019. i venecuelanskim ministarskim prisustvom na obeležavanju šezdesetogodišnjice Pokreta nesvrstanih koje je Srbija ugostila oktobra 2021. Istraživanje primenjuje strukturiranu metodologiju pregleda: korpus od 60 recenziranih studija objavljenih 2019–2026, verifikovan stavku po stavku, sintetizovan je sa dokumentarnom bazom ugovora, deklaracija i arhivskih zapisa i organizovan kroz petokanalnu periodizaciju odnosa. Originalni doprinos članka je koncept nasljeđem posredovanog savezništva (legacy-mediated alignment) — međudržavnog savezništva održavanog naslijeđenim multilateralim kapitalom i recipročnim normama suvereniteta umjesto materijalnom razmjenom — operacionalizovan kroz Matricu bilateralnog savezništva od pet perioda i pet kanala, čija je svaka ćelija dokumentarno usidrena. Ključni nalazi: vrhunci intenziteta odnosa poklapaju se isključivo sa institucionalnim momentima Pokreta nesvrstanih — 1961, 1976, 1989. i 2021. godine — a ne sa bilateralnim ekonomskim ili vojnim interesima; ekonomski i vojni kanali nikada se nisu razvili dalje od okvirnih sporazuma, pri čemu u SIPRI bazi podataka nije registrovan nijedan transfer glavnog konvencionalnog naoružanja u bilo kom smjeru tokom čitavog posmatranog perioda; a savezništvo poslije 2008. počiva na recipročnoj razmjeni nepriznavanja — Kosovo za privremeno predsjedništvo venecuelanske opozicije — koja funkcioniše kao uzajamno osiguranje suvereniteta između dvije države koje osporavaju spoljne presude o sopstvenim državnim pitanjima. Okvir je prenosiv na druge postsocijalističke dijade sa Globalnim jugom održavane sjećanjem na nesvrstanost.

Ključne riječi: *Srbija, Venecuela, Jugoslavija, Pokret nesvrstanih, diplomatska istorija, Kosovo, priznanje, nasljeđem posredovano savezništvo.*