

Serbia and NATO's Shameful Legacy

An Interview

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Global Research, May 14, 2019

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [History](#)

*An interview with **Živadin Jovanović**, distinguished author and former Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1998-2000), President of the Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals*

Maurizio Vezzosi: *Remembering the 1999's bombing over Belgrade, some days ago Serbian president Vucic stressed that Serbia isn't going to join Nato. How do you comment it?*

Živadin Jovanović: Serbia is a peace loving country, never belonged to any military block, never sought other countries' territories or resources. So, I believe that active neutrality, openness, balanced foreign policy and win win cooperation is the best option for Serbia, particularly now in the era of profound global changes.

NATO is responsible for the death of thousands of innocent people in Serbia, including children, for the use of depleted uranium ammunition and other means of massive destruction. It is also responsible for the war damage valued at about 100 billion USD. Therefore, joining NATO would be tantamount to humiliating the victims and to amnesty of those responsible for the crimes against peace and humanity.

MV: How do you describe the legacy of the Atlantic Alliance's bombing over former-Yugoslavia?

ZJ: It is a shameful legacy. From defensive NATO became aggressive alliance, braking UN Charter, Helsinki Final Document, Founding Act (1949), member countries' national constitutions, the role of UN SC. But it is also shameful for member countries which participated in the 1999 illegal aggression. This profound stain on their faces could be removed only by reevaluating immoral and disastrous Clinton/Albright/Blair policy. NATO aggression was not a "little Kosovo war" but a turning point in the global relations, it was decisive step towards destruction of the World Order established on the outcome of the Second WW.

What has followed after were - more wars, millions of killed, wounded and refugees, more military bases, frightening global and national divisions, mistrust, confrontations, spreading of terrorism and separatism - uncertain future of the civilization. Is this what we have expected and hoped for after the fall of the Berlin Wall?

Twenty years later, most of the countries in the Balkans, are puppet states servicing NATO and western multinational corporations. The nations are more divided, the region is underdeveloped and full of tensions. What used to be state or socially owned companies, industry, banks, food production, services - in the course of criminal privatization became

property of the western multinational corporations and a few national tycoons.

From the year 2000, about 40 billion of USD have been sucked from Serbia only by the western banks. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons still live in misery in central Serbia without chances for free and safe return to their homes in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo and Metohija. This is the real face of the western democracy and humanism.

MV: What are the prospects for the Kosovo and Metohija's problem?

ZJ: Perspectives for the balanced, just and sustainable solution will be real only if the West recognizes its own mistakes such as decades of support, financing, training and arming separatist and terrorist groups in Kosovo and Metohija.

Who can claim, for instance, that Germany's two decades long hospitality and support to the "Kosovo Government in exile" of Bujar Bukoshi (1980-2000) was the policy of legally based relations, peace and stability!? Or, could there be proclamation of illegal secession in 2008, if there hadn't been the 1999 NATO aggression, in alliance with the terrorist OBK [KLA] and subsequent occupation of this Serbia's province?

For the peaceful, balanced and lasting solution there is need for political will to respect the basic principles of the international law, the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Document and UN SC resolution 1244 (1999). This decision approved by all permanent UN SC members (USA, Russia, China, GB, France) guarantees wide autonomy for the Province within sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, i.e. Serbia.

It authorizes also return to the Province of agreed contingents of Serbia's military and police, free and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons, including about 250.000 of Serbs and other non-Albanians to their homes. None of these provisions have been complied with, as yet.

The problem is that the western powers (NATO) have been trying to impose a "deal" according to which Serbia would recognize illegal unilateral secession and membership of Kosovo to the United Nations, now, in exchange for the promises to become EU member sometime in the future. Such a "deal" does not take into consideration any principles, laws or UN SC decisions. What the leading western powers are interested in is "solution" tailored to please western geopolitical interests - expansion toward East and confrontation with Russia.

Germany and France, want that Serbia pays for a return of the EU unity on Kosovo. Once they persuade Serbia to sign the "comprehensive legally binding document" then illegal and unilateral secession of Kosovo would become virtually legal. Subsequently the five EU member states opposing recognition (Spain, Slovakia, Rumania, Greece and Cyprus) would be relieved of the fear of this precedent.

Of course, those hopes are in vain. Not only that Serbia will not enter a dishonest "deal", but I should like to see Serbia's diplomacy working hard to further expand the number of EU member countries withdrawing their hastily recognitions [of Kosovo as a nation state] undertaken on Washington's "advice", contrary to the international law, peace and stability in Europe.

MV: What is your opinion on the Brussels negotiations on Kosovo under EU umbrella?

ZJ: The Brussels format of negotiations on Kosovo and Metohija is an inappropriate formula without chances to deliver a balanced and sustainable solution. It is so because the Brussels process includes only the countries and institutions which have continuously and relentlessly supported secession and terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija, even by military aggression, and excludes all countries and organizations including the UN, which support sovereignty and integrity of Serbia as well as compliance with the norms of international law.

Russia and China which participated actively in ending NATO aggression and in adopting UNSC resolution 1244 in 1999 cannot be excluded from the conclusion implementation [of these procedures] in 2019.

As for “Kosovo precedent”, it is already working. Catalonia is just the most visible proof. The others, unfortunately, are “in the pipeline” awaiting their turn.

MV: With a new name - north - Macedonia, Macedonia is joining the Atlantic Alliance. What will be the impacts of this for the Balkans region?

ZJ: Everybody should be free to choose (i.e. its own options) - alliances or neutrality. With regard to the separatist tendency and ideas regarding the creation of Greater Albania, I suppose, the Government in Skopje is hoping that formal membership in NATO will guarantee sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. There is also expectation that this may help in speeding up the process of getting EU membership.

Serbia maintains the policy of openness, good neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation with North Macedonia. Overall relations are traditionally good, supported from both sides and I believe that this will continue after the country formally becomes a NATO member. Newly elected president Stevo Pendarovski and Serbian president Aleksandar Vucic have just exchanged messages expressing their support for further strengthening of good neighborly relations.

MV: How do doctrines and groups close to radical Islam influence the region’s equilibrium?

ZJ: Muslim radicalism in the Balkans is a part of the heritage of the civil war in Bosnia and Hercegovina (1992-5).

During that period, several western power centers which supported Muslim side, were involved in bringing in from the Middle East, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, North Africa and other places, thousands of mujahidin to strengthen forces of Alija Izetbegovic. [They also armed these foreign fighters]

Many of them not only remained in the region in the wake of the war, they were also actively engaged in spreading extremist indoctrination and adoption of elements of sharia law, up to the present. Thus places like Gornja Maoca, Stijena and some others in Bosnia and Herzegovina are controlled by wahhabists.

Extremism financed from outside, is growing.

Kosovo and Metohija and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the places of recruitment of hundreds of ISIS mujahidin.

MV: As Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina shows itself as one of the most problematic point of

whole Balkans area. What are the prospects. Is there the possibility of a new conflict?

ZJ: Perspectives of peace and stability in the Balkans are closely related to changes and processes in Europe as well as globally.

Europe is divided on many lines and caught in confrontation. Terrorism is continuously affecting everyday life. There are more foreign military bases and armament in Europe now than at the time of cold war confrontation.

Geopolitical games and the struggle for spheres of influence are being intensified not only on the global level but within western alliances, too. All this is negatively affecting the Balkans still far from recovery of the recent conflicts. Naturally, that growing tensions, extremisms, revival of neo-fascism, revision of history, double standard policy cause uncertainty and fear of new conflicts.

In such conditions, Albanian separatism [in Kosovo] and the concept of Greater Albania supported by certain power centers are the main source of instability and uncertainty in the Balkans. The other source is enlargement of the Muslim extremism particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also in other Balkan countries and regions including in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

According to mass media reports, a lot of money from certain Gulf countries is being invested in the spreading and strengthening of the Wahhabi movement. The problem of massive migration from the Middle East and North Africa is also being used [by these power centres] to foment the growth of extremism.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the basic problem is to revise the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) guaranteeing constitutional order based on the equality of the two entities – Republic of Srpska and Federation of B&H, i.e. three constituent peoples – Serbs, Bosniaks (Muslims) and Croats. There is a clear intention of the western power centers to establish unitary state dominated by the Bosnians in spite of the fact that Alija Izetbegovic's attempt to impose "Bosnian domination" was the cause of the bloody civil war 1992-1995.

To be able to approach the Balkans in a normal, objective and balanced way, to be able to act efficiently and constructively, Europe needs to undergo open and profound re-examination of its own policies during the whole period extending from the fall of the Berlin Wall up to the present, including its involvement in the so called Yugoslav crisis (1991-95), NATO aggression on Yugoslavia (1999) and the hasty recognition of Kosovo in 2008.

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