

I would like to thank the organisers, primarily to Serbian Renewal Movement, which, as it seems, has always been the first to initiate certain issues that used to be considered distant, unachievable and proved to be accomplished in the end.

I hope that it will not take as much time as it took from March 9th, 1991 to October 5th, 2000. That was the period when we were fighting against Slobodan Milosevic. The debate that is starting, I hope, very seriously in Serbia, will result with a full membership of Serbia in NATO within a much shorter period.

As a professor, I will talk for some 2 to 3 hours today. Do not be afraid, that was just a joke. I will try to tackle, within the shortest possible period of time, several issues that are significant for understanding of essence of Euro-Atlantic integrations and NATO as an organisation. Different researches have been conducted in Serbia related to this issue and the conclusion was reached that people in Serbia are generally against NATO. A very small percentage, although I personally think that it is not small, namely about 30% of people, support Serbia's accession into NATO. Having in mind all negative emotions dating back to 1999 I am of the opinion that it is truly a large percentage.

There are also many people who have no attitude at all when it comes to NATO. Among those 30% of people, we can mainly find those who are better educated and those who devote more attention to following up of politics and understand such issues better, while the emotional reaction is still present. Hence, NATO is seen mainly negatively due to the year of 1999, which is completely understandable. I have to admit that I personally feel quite negative emotions when I remember the year of 1999.

However, the politics is not waged with emotions, namely if it is waged with emotions it often comes to a dead-end. It is evident that there is almost no knowledge of NATO in Serbia. This means that questions related to NATO, its organisation, methods of operation and functioning raise different doubts even among experts. Based on such ignorance and doubts different political, let me say, frauds are built that Mr Draskovic talked about in his address. I think that it is also very important for things mentioned by Mrs Menotti in her address to reach the largest possible number of people in Serbia within the shortest possible period. The fact that we are now faced with the dilemma: military neutrality or membership in NATO is very important for us.

I will try to comment both of the above within truly the shortest possible period, just through certain remarks, so that we can leave more time for discussion on that topic. I think that it is very important to open up the debate in Serbia so that people can ask questions about dilemmas they have and get proper answers to those questions. First, NATO is the alliance of sovereign states and it is very important to know that only sovereign states can join NATO and that they enter with their full state sovereignty in that alliance. Accession into NATO does not diminish the state sovereignty in any way. On the contrary, it is enhanced and all the lawyers know that membership in certain international organisation and possibility that you get to sign an international treaty is the confirmation of sovereignty and not its negation. It is also important to say that in NATO the state sovereignty is preserved through decision-making process, as all of the decisions are made based on consensus.

There is also another prejudice that once you get into NATO you see, as Istvan Gigo used to say,

poor small east European countries that have entered NATO only recently gathered together in front of the American general who appears in the morning to issue orders, which they write into their notebooks and after that set out to fulfil them. It is not like that.

NATO functions based on consensus. Making of certain decision requires the vote of all the member countries. This means that if Serbia joins NATO it will not be possible for it to launch any action without Serbia's approval. When I talk about that, I often say: yes, it works on paper, but in practice... The United States of America launched the military action in Iraq but NATO did not follow because some powerful European countries did not agree to join America in military action in Iraq. Thus, we see the so-called military coalition in Iraq composed of the United States of America and countries that wanted to join them. Some of those countries are NATO members and some are not.

Let us take the latest example of Macedonia's membership. Macedonia did not join NATO only because Greece opposed due to the disputed related to its name. Let us remind ourselves of the problems related to appointment of a new Secretary General at the last summit. The problems were caused by the fact that Turkey opposed the candidate coming from Denmark because of all the problems they had after publishing of the prophet Mohammad's cartoons.

Hence, the practice shows that NATO is primarily the alliance of sovereign states and, not less important, the alliance of democratic states. There are no standards that each country wishing to become a NATO member has to fulfil regarding its internal political structure. This means that it is not possible that if we join NATO they come up with certain orders we will have to fulfil and that our children, which is a quite often used phrase, die at some borderline or who knows where.

Simply speaking, when you join NATO you do not have the obligation of any kind. This is what raises complaints in the United States when it comes to NATO – you can join the organisation, enjoy all the benefits provided by NATO and later on have no obligation whatsoever because each obligation depends on your sovereign decision.

The second thing that is also important to know regarding NATO is the fact that it is a military-political alliance, rather political than military, which means that constant consultations are in progress within NATO. This means that North-Atlantic Council as the highest body is not a military body and that NATO is managed by political bodies. Summits are held twice a year and they gather the heads of states and governments. Each state in the so-called Permanent Council has its ambassadors who are based in Brussels and have the possibility of daily consultations and decision-making. Decisions in NATO are practically made through constant consultations. Therefore, NATO has the civil structure. There is also the military structure, but there is civil control over the armed forces of NATO.

NATO's military structure is controlled by NATO's civil structure, which is its superior, so that practically democracy that exists within NATO member states is reflected at the level of the alliance as well. Another important thing is the fact that we can constantly hear about some kind of NATO army. There is no NATO army. NATO has got a joint AVAX system and there is a very small staff executing joint tasks. Everything else belongs to member states. This is very important when we talk about the costs of NATO.

It is also important to know that after the split of the Warsaw Treaty NATO deals more and more, and Mrs Deborah also talked about that, with the issues such as struggle against global terrorism, struggle against natural and technical catastrophes, namely civil protection as it is usually called here and abroad.

We had the example of forest fires. Serbia and all its neighbouring countries would find it difficult to buy one canader and maintain it, and they are necessary for fire control and extinguishing. NATO is the framework within which we can provide what we need in order to be safer and more secure through joint contributions, so that it becomes cheaper for everyone. There is also the example of global pandemics of a new flu variety that is approaching us. NATO disposes with and develops mechanisms to fight against such global pandemics. We also have the example of piracy in Somalia where NATO's forces are the only ones that can send ships and protect the commercial fleet etc. NATO is the organisation with perspective. There are rumours here that it will break apart in a year or two. However, we have the example of France that used to be a member of political part of NATO alone for almost 40 years and it returned to military structure as well and took over full responsibility for military actions of NATO at the previous summit.

Where is the opportunity for Serbia? The opportunity to be among the strong, to be in the currently most powerful alliance that exists through consultations that I was talking about. You may be asked to accept certain decisions and in return, you may promote your own political interests. You can hear many of those who say that we are entering in some kind of political trade etc., that those who do not know that the world is unfair and those who do not know that the world is based on mutual interest relations should speak up immediately because we have some politicians here who, at their age of sixty, get stunned when they hear that the world is unfair, that power supersedes the right. Dear gentlemen, the world is unfair, it is unsafe and if you wish to promote your interests, you can do it only if you have the opportunity to do it.

When it comes to Kosovo and Metohija, which is definitely the most painful issue for us, I always ask if we would have been bombed in 1999 if Serbia, namely former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had entered the Partnership for Peace programme in 1994. However, I am now entering into the story that I hate the most – looking back into the past. So, let us look into the future. Let me say what benefits we will have if we join NATO. The benefit for us, if we join NATO, will be the fact that, at least, NATO will not bomb us if we do not agree with that. We need to decide to be bombed if NATO plans to bomb us. Thus, we will have the opportunity to be among the strongest, we will have the opportunity to promote our political and economic interests. NATO is not a mere military alliance; actually, it is the least of that at the moment, since it includes a whole range of activities referring to enhancing of security. What is the alternative to NATO? Military neutrality is the alternative that is offered to us. What is military neutrality? It is primarily the institute that belongs to a classical international law and in the 20th century only Austria became a military neutral country after the World War II, namely somewhere in 1955 when great powers of that time decided that Austria should become a military neutral country because they did not know what to do with it as it used to be a part of the former German Reich. Germany was divided at that time in two parts and Austria remained as its third part that was designated to become military neutral. Military neutrality is both a legal and political term. I think that at a point when politics did not know what to do any more that unfortunate declaration on military neutrality was launched, which does not mean anything itself. We can often hear that Serbia is a military neutral country. That is a lie. Serbia is not a military neutral country. It is not sufficient for you to declare that you are a

military neutral country to become one. It is necessary to get the recognition of such status through international treaties.

Hence, all interested parties need to confirm military neutrality through international treaties. If there are no treaties of that kind, the situation is equal as if I would decide to come and say here: Good afternoon, I am Zoran Dragisic, the president of the Assembly of Vojvodina. To be the President of the Assembly of Vojvodina I need to be elected to that function. Military neutrality is legitimate. However, as they say, not all the things that are in favour of freedom are in your favour. Therefore, we may state our wish to be a military neutral country but this means that we have to offer international treaties to all interested stakeholders. Those treaties imply that we can be faced with exceptionally difficult demands. For example, the issue of our military industry. Last night I attended the celebration of 60th anniversary of SDP and our military industry has accomplished fantastic export results at the time of great Yugoslavia already. It is in the recovery stage. Last year, our military industry exported goods in the value of over 400 million dollars and I personally think it is our great economic opportunity. Military neutrality in a classical sense implies that you are neutral in relation to any military conflict while permanent military neutrality implies that you will remain neutral in relation to any military conflict that may arise in the future as well. In other words, this means that you must not support anyone's military endeavours. In relation to our military industry this means it may happen that someone, our brothers, the Russian for example, comes and says: your Kalashnikov is cheaper and of better quality compared to ours: if you wish us to recognise your neutrality, you can manufacture those Kalashnikovs only for the needs of our armed forces. The United States of America can impose some other condition that could also refer to, for example, export of arms, or medical treatment (who we will be allowed to treat at our Army Medical Academy), to development of our scientific-research projects. The fact is that once you start offering the treaty recognising your military neutrality to others asking them to recognise and guarantee it to you it is never unconditional.

This means we can find ourselves faced with such difficult conditions, although, fortunately, those who adopted the above-mentioned declaration do not even think of asking that. However, I am talking about that kind of alternative. Military neutrality says that we will be safe if we are military neutral. Military neutrality guarantees to us - and it is the only guarantee - that no one will defend us if someone attacks us. There are no other guarantees granted by military neutrality.

Moreover, the third thing, when we talk about money, is the fact that military neutrality is very expensive because military neutral countries allocate much more money for their own armed forces. Let us take the example of Switzerland. They have exceptionally respectable armed forces. The fact that is not widely known is that they have been targeting the airplanes that violated their neutrality. I think they have taken down twenty-six airplanes over their territory since the World War II. I hope the historians will not object if I do not have the exact figures. Currently, Switzerland has a highly powerful air force.

The issues of Austria, Sweden, and Finland are disputable when it comes to a true extent of their neutrality, in a classical sense. Military neutrality and European Union. The European Union has got its own system that is developing, a system of joint external security policy. This means that the European Union develops its own security system. Thus, you cannot be military neutral and at the same time belong to a collective security system. Those two things are unmatched. You cannot be military neutral as the EU Member State in the sense in which the neutrality is offered to us. You

cannot even be military neutral and the UN Member State because the United Nations also have their collective security system as each Member State has to offer certain facilities, either in material, or in manpower, or in providing passage on the request of the UN Security Council for the sake of easier resolving of critical issue in the world. Contemporary understanding of peace and peace keeping in the world and military neutrality are also incomparable. There is a certain positive attitude to peace in the world of today. Thus, peacekeeping is the responsibility of all members of the international community where the war is prohibited. The war has been prohibited by the UN Charter for the first time as the means of resolving international disputes so that all Member States have the obligation to undertake a collective action against all those who commit acts of aggression. This also raises the question of morality of military neutrality.

As a responsible member of international family of nations, you have to reply to violations of rights and aggressions on sovereign countries. I simply cannot understand how could Serbia fit into the concept of military neutrality having in mind our position at the Balkans and the world we belong to in 2009, 2010...

Therefore, I think that it is a false dilemma. I think that as far as Serbia is concerned, and I am speaking from the point of view of a person dealing with security issues, it would be the safest if it joined NATO. The fact remains that there are still a lot of unresolved issues at the Balkans. If we act as enemies, since we can really be either a part of the alliance or the enemies, it will be difficult to achieve any other position. I am afraid that those issues will be resolved again to the harm of Serbia and to the harm of Serbian national interests.

There are the issues of the future of Kosovo and Metohija, the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the issue that is certain to get open – the issue of Republika Srpska. Therefore, Serbia's membership in NATO, as they say in NATO, is a good mechanism for all the open issues at the Balkans, once they are opened, will be resolved through consultations, through a dialogue, through an agreement aimed at avoiding new armed conflicts and new catastrophes. You can take the examples of Greece and Turkey. I claim that if both of them had not been NATO Member States we would have witnessed several bloody conflicts between those two countries since the end of the World War II. Fortunately, that did not happen. Despite many open and unresolved issues, Turkey and Greece resolve their problems in a civilised and democratic way.

I will truly stop here because if I continue I could talk until this evening. I would like to leave more time for discussions since I think that this should be a debate rather than a series of lectures.