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## BASIC DETERMINANTS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF SERBIA AND THE USA

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**Abstract:** *Bilateral diplomatic relations between two countries are of exceptional importance for the overall political, economic, technical and technological development of a country. They have an impact on the cultural, sociological and wider milieu, and sometimes much more than that. Namely, those relationships can greatly influence the overall development of a society. This especially applies to relations, when one of these countries plays a decisive role in the determinants of the entire world development and the further direction of world social and economic movements. The analysis of bilateral Serbian-American relations all the more deserves special attention, where the clarification of the historical context of those relations can reflect certain trends in the further development of Serbian society itself, especially, if we take a relatively long period of over one hundred and forty years including a large number of changes, primarily Serbian statehood. This topic gains its complexity when all the challenges in that period of its organization from monarchy to republic, through changes in the ideological patterns of socialism and liberal capitalism, federative organization with a multi-national composition, up to the current status of the Republic of Serbia with autonomous provinces in its composition. In fact, the status of one of them - the province of Kosovo - is an open question, not so much for Serbia as for the USA, which in the last decade of the last century, in the majority of the Serbian professional and scientific public is of the opinion that the USA has become the patron of the independence of this entity and one of the the biggest proponents of Kosovo's independence, especially in the context of its integration into the European Union, where the Republic of Serbia sees itself. Today, in the form of a French-German proposal to resolve the status of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, the fact that the main initiative is the American side's, insisting on resolving the status of Kosovo within that framework, is becoming increasingly apparent, even though there is a UN Resolution that clearly indicates respect for the principles of international*

*public law regarding respect for the territorial sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia. The current moment, in which the Ukrainian crisis has united the Western allies to respect this principle on the occasion of the self-declaration of the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics, is a definite test for all of them that the principles of public international law regarding the inviolability of territorial integrity and integrity are consistently respected for all countries, and not on a selective basis. The role of the USA is extremely important in this sense, and the task of both the Serbian leadership and the Serbian diplomats is to be the biggest spokesmen for the principled application of international law. The US-led NATO attack on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 was a dangerous precedent in recent history. Later, the recognition of Kosovo without the consent of the mother country, starting with America, and then by most of the countries of the European Union, is another precedent that already seriously changes the standards. The consequences of this can already be seen in the secession of several entities without the consent of the mother country, accompanied by war events, whose the end is hard to predict at this moment. Therefore, the role of the USA has always been crucial, not only in the world context but also in the current diplomatic relations with Serbia.*

**Keywords:** *diplomacy, Serbia, Kosovo, international public law, USA*

## INTRODUCTION

On February 1, 1881, diplomatic relations had been officially established between Serbia and the United States of America with the exchange of diplomatic notes by Serbian and American diplomats - Filip Hristić and John Casson. There were long preparations for this act, and after suggestions and instructions from the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the diplomat handed a note to his colleague in Vienna with a request to forward it to the American State Department in Washington. After that, the State Department reacted positively, sending a telegram from the US President to Serbian King Milan Obrenović with the information that he had appointed the first US resident ambassador in Belgrade. Ambassador Skjner soon came to Belgrade, and after numerous diplomatic activities in October of the same year, the first Trade Agreement between Serbia and the USA was signed.

Therefore, there began diplomatic activity with numerous ups and downs, major and minor results, lasting for 142 years. In this research paper, a chronological presentation of the determinants of diplomatic relations between Serbia and the USA is given, through which the crucial factors and factors that further determined the direction and goal of the relationship between these two countries over time, as well as its transformation, are presented.

The first phase of the relationship is the period from 1881 to 1919, when the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed, which was recognized by America as a new entity. It is a period marked by a series of bilateral relations, where American President Wilson's favor with the support of the Serbian army in Corfu, at the end of 1917, was observed. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes addressed the

Congress, and at the same session, Woodrow Wilson, the President of the USA, presented the plan that was the basis of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The idea of founding the League of Nations, later the United Nations, was outlined in that document. Historians also record the period of exceptional relations between the two countries with documents from which one can see large financial support, sent, among other things, to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

During the First World War both countries were allies and in the period between the two world wars there had lasted calm and rest between these two countries. On the eve of the Second World War, the presence of the Nazis in the Balkans and the growth of Hitler's power in Europe restored American interest in the European countries, especially in the Balkan Peninsula. As Serbia became a key country on the Balkan Peninsula, the influence, presence and promptness of American diplomacy were significantly increased. After the outbreak of the first war activities on our territory, and the appearance of resistance in the form of the formation of the People's Liberation Army, the contact of American diplomats was continuous with the Government of the Kingdom, which was in exile in London. Konstantin Fotić, as a representative of the Kingdom, received the rank of ambassador in 1942 in Washington, which raised the level of the mission to the rank of an embassy. With this, the US State Department sent a clear message that the US partner is the Kingdom, and not the NOV Supreme Staff headed by Josip Broz. With this act, America clearly supported the Chetnik movement of Draža Mihajlović, whose support lasted until the first unofficial visit of the American delegation to the Supreme Command of the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia on September 16, 1943 (Lopičić, Lopičić Ančić, 2021).

At that time, the American intelligence service - Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Unit, was active in Belgrade. The relations with the new authorities that took over from the Government in exile were unofficial, and only at the Tehran Conference, with President Roosevelt's address to Josip Broz Tito in May 1944, did they become official. The act of transferring the American embassy from London to Belgrade can be interpreted as the establishment of new relations between the two sides, with the newly elected authorities of the FNRJ, by becoming official. However, it remains one of the many open questions about the relationship between the two countries. Why, despite the American condemnation of the bombing of Belgrade at the beginning of the war in 1941 by the Axis Powers, in April 1944 and despite unofficial relations and regular contacts with the partisan authorities of Yugoslavia, entire cities and areas were bombed with dangerous weapons by American aviation, there were over ten thousand innocent civilian victims, of which approximately half of that number died in Belgrade alone (Lopičić, Lopičić Ančić, 2021).

## **1. HISTORICAL SEQUENCE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SERBIA AND THE USA**

Immediately before the liberation itself, American aid along with British aid was generous. After liberation, in the period of reconstruction, that continuity continued at

the same pace, with a large amount of aid coming from the newly formed UN, where the main contribution was from the United States. In the edition of the book *Economic relations between Yugoslavia and the USA*, the flow and dynamics of economic cooperation between the two countries in the post-war period can be seen in more detail. Behind that increased economic presence of America in Yugoslavia, in reality was the intention to distance it from the influence of the USSR, to send a signal to the eastern countries under the influence of the USSR that it is possible to live well without it, as well as to block access to Moscow The Adriatic Sea as an important route to the Mediterranean. Moscow tried to eliminate that danger with the Informbiuro Resolution, which Tito rejected and thus caused Moscow's anger. In this way, Yugoslavia was heavily involved in the Cold War period between East and West. The newly formed Yugoslav state, "by its nature and geo-strategic position, was a suitable ground for testing global forms of manipulation, revising the past and creating assumptions for the creation of collective simulacrum structures. (Stanković, Simić, 2022, 306)" Informbiuro is a period of economic, political, diplomatic blockade of relations between the USSR and FNRJ, which resulted in the termination of friendly relations, boycott (economic, trade, military) and open conflict at all levels. This blockade in diplomatic, political, military and economic cooperation lasted until the visit of the President of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, to Belgrade on May 25, 1955, when the period of consolidation of relations at all levels began.

This was followed by a period of distancing Yugoslavia both from the USSR and from the influence of the USA, as well as an attempt to lead an independent policy outside of any of these blocs. The Yugoslav position and the division of the sphere of influence between the East and the West brought the leadership under great pressure from both sides. While most of the countries at Yalta were divided under the influence of one or the other, the fate of Yugoslavia was very special due to the intertwining of the influence of both. Thus, on the one hand, the political system was of a socialist character, more like the USSR, with a single party in power, the League of Communists, while at the same time, unlike the eastern countries of Europe, the influence of American culture, media and events and how it was present both in the homes of the citizens of Yugoslavia and in the influx of Western culture. The non-aligned, whose founder was Tito in addition to Nehru and Nasr, left a special mark on Belgrade's diplomatic relations, both with Washington and Moscow. Neither one nor the other world center was impressed by the role of Yugoslavia in that movement, which gained unexpectedly great popularity among all third world countries.

From that participation of Yugoslavia in that important world event, Yugoslavia had great benefits, but also strained relations, especially with the USA (Danevska, Stankovic, 2023). At the meeting in Brijun in July 1956, one of the first documents of this movement was adopted, and six years later, Belgrade became the host of the Non-Aligned Movement in September 1961. At this conference, which was attended by 25 countries and 3 observers, the founding document of the movement was adopted, where the basic goals and principles of the non-aligned (Radovanovic, 1974). The next meeting of the non-aligned

in Belgrade was held on the eve of the breakup of the country in 1989, so that, as an observer, Serbia would once again host this club of countries, which both have a significant influence, both in terms of the number and the dispersion of its members in virtually all parts of the world. Yugoslavia achieved significant contacts, economic cooperation with the third world, as well as in the cultural and educational spheres. This issue deserves special attention, but for us in this context it is important to single out the moment of cooling of relations with the USA, after, according to American diplomats, the pro-Russian performance of the President of Yugoslavia at the First Non-Aligned Conference in 1961 (Bogetić, 2006:71). The tightening of relations with the USSR after the Informburo resulted in blockades of a military, economic and technical nature, as well as a cooling of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In this case, Yugoslavia was faced with new challenges, which were greatly accelerated by the activities of the American services in the form of support for the hostile emigration of Yugoslavia, primarily by the support of Ustasha, Chetnik, Albanian extremism, which was supposed to attack the basic values of the then Federation, equality peoples and nationalities of Yugoslavia.

As a result, there followed a series of terrorist actions against Yugoslav diplomatic missions and personnel, as well as against foreign trade houses of the former Yugoslavia, behind which these very structures were. As it usually happens, the one you feed will easily turn the same weapon against you. With the hijacking of an American passenger plane by Ustasha emigration, where a certain number of American security personnel were killed, the US policy towards these forms of extremism changed (Bogetić, 2006:71). This ends this form of damaged relations between the two countries and begins a new period in which there were numerous visits from both sides at the highest level. First, Richard Nixon visited Belgrade in 1970 (and there were several visits by the Vice President of the USA to Yugoslavia), followed by the visits of Gerald Ford in 1977. The President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, for his part, visited the presidents of the USA on several occasions. First, during the session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1960, then in 1963, 1971 and 1978 (Milošević, Pantelić, 2014).

The 1990s seem to be the period marked by the deterioration of bilateral relations between the Federal Republic of Serbia - on the one hand, and the USA - on the other. Publicly, the US has declared that it supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In doing so, they declared their support for the integrity of the country, although it turned out later that they supported extremist, paramilitary formations, which committed numerous mass crimes against the Serbian population (Lopičić, Lopičić Ančić, 2021:132). The USA was behind the UN Resolution on sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on several occasions. Likewise, the USA was the initiator of the establishment of the Hague Tribunal, an ad hoc international criminal court for crimes committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Milinković, 1994).

An event that remained unprecedented in the previous history of the United Nations is the bombing of NATO, whose member countries are attacked by the USA, without the

consent of the Security Council. Under the name Merciful Angel and with the justification that the reason for this is the prevention of a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo, where a huge number of bombs were dropped on that very area, which are still the subject of discussion, analysis and attempts to prosecute this case by the victims of these destructions, which certainly, they do not have a national characteristic, but the inhabitants of all those areas destroyed by NATO bombs suffer equally. The targets of the bombing were not only military facilities, but also civilian facilities, cities, settlements, hospitals, energy and road infrastructure, and a large number of civilian victims.

It was estimated that the material damage of that act amounted to more than 150 billion US dollars (Nato agresija na SRJ 99, 2000). The question of the motive of this act arises with reason, when Kosovo, which was later recognized by all the countries participating in the bombing, among others, as an independent state, was not questioned in any way, as a possible member of NATO in order to proceed to the eventual activation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Alliance. It is worrisome that such an act remained unsanctioned, neither diplomatically in the UN Security Council, which is in charge of peacekeeping by the UN charter, nor legally, in front of the International Court of Justice, which found itself incompetent due to the lawsuit of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia against NATO. Later, the lawsuit was changed individually against all participants in the act of aggression against a sovereign country. Such precedents are very dangerous and unfortunately, it gives anyone who has force the right to use force against a sovereign country, without looking for and applying all the mechanisms provided by international public law in cases of possible violations of human rights.

This precedent opened up a number of issues, especially the role of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. It is known that there are numerous mechanisms that provide the possibility of investigating, initiating and sanctioning the behavior of any irresponsible subject. On the other hand, the case of the bombing, and later the recognition without the consent of an entity, both from America and EU member states, largely opens a Pandora's box of further upheavals on fragile European soil (Danevska, Stankovic, 2023).

### **1.1. Changes in diplomatic relations after the October events**

As a result of events in the 1990s, there was a break in diplomatic relations between the two countries, and this break lasted until the election of new authorities in 2000, with the arrival of Vojislav Koštunica, when diplomatic relations were restored, and thus economic cooperation. The first decade of the new millennium brings a new phase in the development of bilateral relations, the period of which can be divided into several special phases. The first four years belong to the period of improving cooperation and mutual relations. "The period from 2005 to 2008 is marked as a period of cooperation and tightening of relations due to negotiations on the status of Kosovo. From 2008 to 2010 - a period of quiet confrontation and from 2010 to 2012 - a period of slight improvement (Vujačić, 2015: 207 – 216). The most recent period is the period marked on the world stage by the

Minsk Agreements, where an attempt was made to escalate relations between NATO, and more precisely America and Russia, to be de-escalated by the events in Ukraine, which followed the self-secession of Crimea from Ukraine. It was very reminiscent of the act of self-proclamation of Kosovo without the consent of the home state, but this time the American administration supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

After the change of the Milošević regime, a new phase of relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Serbia began, a period officially confirmed by the main topic of the Congress on trade preferences with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which opened the possibility of more intensive trade relations, when the highest amount of foreign direct investments in the FRY was recorded. . By 2008, the tobacco industry in Niš received 800 million US dollars, and about 100 million in Vranjska. The largest American investors Philip Morris and BAT, significant investments in the steel industry as well. With the privatization of the Smederevo ironworks and other related facilities, a new period of industrial development begins in Serbia, which in that period becomes Serbia's largest exporter. The entry of Microsoft on the Serbian market and a number of other important global American players. This is the period when America gives great support to Serbia's approach to European integration.

The crown of such good relations resulted in the visits of several high-level congressional delegations, as well as the direct support of America, more precisely the American contingent in KFOR, to the Serbian population in March 2004, due to the extremist actions of certain groups of Albanians in Kosovo. In 2006, the State Partnership Agreement was signed between the Ministries of Defense of the two countries. That period also resulted in the cooperation of the Republic of Serbia, as well as some countries from the region, with NATO. This is the period when Serbia actively participates in the Partnership for Peace program, and in September 2007 it expressed its intention to actively participate in this program. At the same time, a clear distinction should be made between readiness for cooperation and the path of membership, followed by other countries in the region. All aspects of the post-October events in the cooperation of both sides are in marked growth, except for the issue of the status of Kosovo.

## **2. THE QUESTION OF KOSOVO AFTER THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER**

In the period when the negotiations on the status of Kosovo under the auspices of the UN begin, the American Congress, in a debate specifically dedicated to Kosovo, among other things, emphasizes the unity of all members of the Contact Group, which consists of NATO, the EU, Russia and America, stressing that this matter should be handled very carefully, where as Nicholas Burns, then undersecretary of state, underlines: "We all understand that independence is one of the options, as well as wider autonomy". The Serbian leadership explicitly opposed the position promoted by the American side through Richard Holbrooke, which was more along the lines of Kosovo's independence with the guaranteed rights of the Serbian minority. Vojislav Koštunica made it clear at the

session of the United Nations Security Council dedicated to Kosovo, that the recognition of Kosovo's independence as an independent state would be a dangerous "precedent with severe far-reaching consequences for the world order". The United Nations has approved the start of negotiations on the status of Kosovo, Deutsche Welle, October 25, 2005. The beginning of the negotiations was also marked by the position of the American delegation, which adhered to the uniqueness of the case of Kosovo, as a "unique case".

In such an environment, the Kosovo provisional authorities are working to maneuver around the disagreement of the Russian delegation at the UN with the American position on the independence of Kosovo by unilaterally declaring the independence of Kosovo. This caused violent reactions from the Serbs, followed by riots that culminated in an attack on the American embassy as a sign of dissatisfaction with the American position on this issue. It was one of the most difficult periods of bilateral relations between the two countries, which is still burdened by the issue of Kosovo's independence. Serbia has developed a strong diplomatic activity to protect its sovereignty primarily within the framework of UN institutions. This is how it happened that the UN Assembly, as an official entity that had legitimacy, raised the question of the legitimacy of Kosovo's self-declaration of independence before the International Court of Justice. Unfortunately, with the unfortunate wording, whether the act of self-declaration of Kosovo's independence is not contrary to international law. The question so generally asked is whether there is a great possibility that the court in its opinion will express itself in support of those who extended that position.

During that period, we note the visit of the US Vice President to Serbia, Josef Biden, and talks with the future President of the UN General Assembly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jeremic. During that period, during the mandate of President Tadić, the negotiations were transferred from the UN stage to the European Union, which was a key mistake of the Serbian leadership, which prevented the possibility of Russian support for Serbian sovereignty. Since then, the EU has taken over the further course of normalization of the already significantly damaged relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Although, at first glance, the exit of the negotiations from the UN framework gives the impression that the big players, America and Russia, have remained on the sidelines, and that issue should be resolved within the framework of the EU, it is becoming increasingly clear that the USA still has the main initiative in the further course of negotiations.

### **2.1. The status of candidate for EU membership related to the progress of negotiations with Kosovo**

The new Serbian government, led by SNS, begins new negotiations with Kosovo under the auspices of the EU, after which the so-called Brussels Agreement was initiated. Within that concept, the status of municipalities with a larger part of the Serbian population should be resolved, i.e. community of Serbian municipalities, but within the scope of Kosovo regulations. Obviously, what Holbrook advocated earlier, which is the independence of Kosovo with a certain guarantee of the rights of Serbian residents, is now being



implemented through this form. The question of the status of the Serbian communities is under ice, for more than a decade the Albanian leaders have ignored it as their obligation, thus bringing the Serbian leadership into the act of conducting negotiations on the union of Serbian municipalities, de facto admitting that they are conducting negotiations on the independence status of Kosovo. A Serbian delegation led by the Prime Minister, Ivica Dacic, is visiting the USA, where the emphasis is on strengthening economic relations and American investments in Serbia, as well as the issue of the status of Kosovo. In March 2014, as an occasion for the declaration of Crimea's secession from Ukraine, the West, under the leadership of America, announced sanctions against Russia, which the new leadership of Serbia did not join, which was again the reason for the cooling of relations between Washington and Belgrade.

### **3. CURRENT CONFLICTS IN UKRAINE AND RELATIONS BETWEEN AMERICA AND SERBIA**

Actually, this conflict has a longer history, but it can be said that the Maidan events in 2014 were already a clear indication that this area is becoming one of the most critical points where the interests of NATO and the Russian Federation collide. It is the period of the rise of Chinese, above all, economic presence around the world. Thus, during Obama's second term, the focus of the American administration's interests became Asia, more precisely the Chinese-Russian alliance, as well as strengthening the military component of NATO's eastern bloc. Among the military measures, the deployment of the rapid reaction forces, the strength of several thousand soldiers of the alliance in four countries - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as well as the renewal of the commitments undertaken by the members to increase their expenditures for defense budgets to 2 percent of the gross domestic product stand out (Jovičević, 2014). These decisions changed the plans for the implementation of the South Stream project, which had direct consequences on further energy flows to the Balkans, and especially to Serbia. Thus, the Russians withdrew from the project, and Serbia lost a large and significant political support in the form of Russian guarantees, given during the sale of the majority share to NIS. Thus, the current crisis hotspots, including Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, Georgia, Moldova and Transnistria, became crisis front lines, according to the words of the then US Secretary of State, John Kerry.

At the talks between the Serbian leadership and the American administration, in addition to issues in the field of IT cooperation, there is also the point of diversifying the gas supply, and gas from Azerbaijan is mentioned as an alternative. High-level bilateral visits are frequent, and cooperation is deepening with Serbia's participation in peacekeeping missions within the UN and EU. Serbia was especially supported in this activity with a special grant of 9.7 million dollars (FACT SHEETS US SERBIA relations. (2016).Progress through partnership, The White house, August 16, 2016).In that period, the American focus is on the energy dependence of the Balkans on Russia, as well as the strengthening of Russian power through Russian and pro-Russian media. Serbia gained

a little space exclusively through the view of Kosovo, which the USA views as “a process that is irreplaceable for regional stability” (Testimony by Deputy Assistant Secretary Hoyt Yee, US Department of State, House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe, Euroasia and Emerging Threats, May 17, 2017). Russia’s interest in acquiring diplomatic immunity in the NIS, as well as Serbia’s refusal to join the sanctions against the Russian Federation have left a great deal of mistrust within the American administration. Equally great fear remains on the side of the Serbian leadership, which is creating pressure for the recognition of Kosovo, even though it comes through European countries that have the largest economic and political presence in the country, fearing that it was initiated and supported by the White House. Relations of mistrust on both sides at a given moment, among other things, mark the bilateral relations of the two countries.

We are witnessing tectonic changes on the world geopolitical map, which are directly reflected in the bilateral relations between the USA and the Republic of Serbia. The consequences of the Minsk Agreements and their implementation, or rather the lack of implementation, are being felt by the entire world with today’s current events on the Ukrainian front, where the spears of the East and the West are clashing like never before. This period also marks the change of administration in the White House, when the Democrats are replaced by the Republicans, led by President Trump, when there are certain changes in the foreign policy of the White House, especially in an attempt to redefine US priorities.

On the plan of Kosovo, those changes were hardly reflected. To what extent the current events on the world stage, as well as the possible new composition of the administration would change the course of relations between the two countries and what is the perspective of further relations are questions that largely depend on both global geopolitical events and the skill of diplomatic activities of Serbian diplomats at all levels and forms of multilateral and bilateral diplomacy. How much will the Ukrainian crisis and Russia’s attack, or “special intervention”, as President Putin called this activity, explaining it as protection against the genocidal extermination of the Russian people, who are in the majority in these regions of Ukraine, affect the attitude of the Western allies towards the act of NATO aggression and time will show further support for the independence of Kosovo. The issue of Kosovo is gaining more and more attention not only in diplomatic circles, but also in the circles of legal science due to the self-secession of certain parts of Ukraine and their recognition as an independent Republic, and later the merger of these parts of Ukraine with the Russian Federation.

### **3.1. The geopolitical situation as a determinant of bilateral Serbian-American relations**

There are several factors that generally affect bilateral relations between the two countries. One of the main determinants of relations between Serbia and the USA is the current geopolitical situation, and accordingly America and Serbia will determine their goals and priorities in concrete relations, both through its participation in multilateral

diplomacy, primarily through the work of the UN Security Council and in the UN system, as well and in regional forums and communities. At the same time, in bilateral relations with these countries. bilateral and multilateral relations are very complicated and the coordination of activities in them is, among other things, the result of the skill of diplomacy. This is especially characteristic of the great powers, which maintain their influence on the world stage through numerous mechanisms, both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. America is especially able to ensure the control of its dominant position in parallel with political means, especially economic and military diplomacy, and certainly with particularly significant means of so-called soft diplomacy.

Current world events are of such high intensity that America is in the center of focus and relations with this power are extremely important. All the more so since it has always been a key participant in those events as is testified and confirmed by numerous historical events. The position of the USA has always had great importance on the further course of the entire social development in the world. Today, we are living witnesses of those claims and the duty of science is to make its contribution by analyzing this very complex period, especially through the aspect of diplomatic relations between Serbia and the USA. In this way, we can predict the further development of events, the position of American diplomacy towards the issue of the Balkans in the newly created circumstances, and especially the relationship towards Serbia. Bilateral relations presuppose reciprocity, respect for national interests, territorial integrity and sovereignty, primarily as a basic principle of international public law in the direction of strengthening friendly relations, by improving political, economic, cultural and all other areas of cooperation.

## CONCLUSION

The world is changing at a rapid rate, and new alliances are being formed. Some are getting stronger, others are on the decline. Many social phenomena are in the process of being redefined, so that after this conflict, the biggest since the Second World War, the two most powerful parties of the East and the West will have to sit down at the table and agree on new international public legal frameworks for the functioning of the world, which will ensure world prosperity globally. Above all, they have to ensure a lasting peace in the world. The impossibility of diplomacy and the UN system to prevent this situation imposes the need for negotiations, which will respect all the principles of public international law. A number of initiatives have emerged to help mediate a diplomatic solution to the conflict, and this is to be commended.

Diplomatic solutions are essential for the prosperity of mankind. Serbia has often been the target of invaders, but also the interest of great powers, primarily because of its key role in a very important part of the world, as a place where eastern and western civilizations meet. That is precisely why Serbia can and should play a very constructive role in resolving this conflict. Serbia took a principled position towards the conflict, starting from the basic principles of international public law, as well as from its own

national interests. Although under diplomatic pressure and the influence of both the East and the West, Serbia maintains its position on a principled basis and, accordingly, can expect the resolution of its essential issues. In the first place this is about the protection of territorial integrity, peace and economic prosperity and its place both in the European Union and in Eurasian integration, while maintaining its neutral military stance. Undoubtedly, Serbia belongs both geographically and economically primarily to the European Union, with which it has the largest scope of cooperation, but it also has its deep traditional ties with Eurasian integrations, which also represent a powerful platform for cooperation and prosperity of Serbia. Any exclusivity is harmful, and the neutral military position gives Serbia the right and obligation to be a bridge between East and West, because they have all been destroyed, and to be a flow between the two sides of the world in the biggest possible crisis after the Second World War. In this sense, the internal changes of these integration communities are underway, new instruments and flows of world capital are being created as well as new values that must include the uniqueness and national interests of each country. Serbia should insist on the principled and consistent application of international law and will thus make its greatest possible contribution in overcoming the insurmountable differences between East and West. In this way, they will gain the trust of both American and European, on the one hand, and Russian and Chinese partners. Big states have always started from their own interests in these relations, but their interest now, when the world is facing the biggest challenge since World War II, should primarily be the consistent application of public international law, because that is the only way to ensure peace and stability. This is a time of great changes, and no matter how much you think that the American attitude towards Serbia is constant and that it will not change significantly regarding the issue of its integrity, you need to be careful, because time is working on Serbia's side. The role of the Serbian leadership and diplomacy is crucial. The next elections and pre-election activities on the American political scene and the relationship of all key factors to the Serbian issue will be especially important. This is the period when diplomacy must do its job, intensifying contacts with all actors who have or will have a decisive role in American society. Consequently, bilateral relations between Serbia and the USA have always been, and in the future, bearing in mind the current momentum, will be from of even greater importance above all for the Republic of Serbia.

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