

"Serbia does not wish to take part in any war, including a cold war," wrote First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic in an author's text to "Nedeljnik". He added that our country stands ready "always to put its experiences in the service of peace and to assist in finding a compromise solution to any conflict, even the ongoing one in Ukraine". For this reason, Serbia "insists on dialogue and compromise in addressing all world crises" and it will continue to act this way also as Chair of the OSCE, next year".

"The best answer to the question as to whether another cold war has already started is to paraphrase a sentence of Svetislav Basara (writer): "No, because it has never ended". Indeed, anyone intending to deal, at least slightly, with the geopolitical relations worldwide, knows very well that it is simply impossible to have any kind of "peace" between the great powers.

There are too many interests involved, too much money, oil, gas, arms....to have the great powers see each other in any other way than as eternally antagonistic opponents.

Obviously, many things have changed since the "official" Cold War period.

The "red-devil sceptre" of communism and its black imperialist counterpart of capitalism in the form it existed in the 1960's and 1970's is no longer there.

Today, everything is much more wrapped up, veiled and sophisticated – from the intensions to the realization itself.

However, only one thing did not change: the rules that apply to "ordinary people" do not apply to big opponents.

This, among other things, is something that Serbia learned the hard way – that the rules for us and for "them" are in no way the same.

We have paid and continue to pay today a high price for our mistakes, for our sinful ambitions and our crimes (and we admitted that such crimes existed, too).

They, the great powers, are not obliged even to give any thought to it.

There are no courts for the mighty. There are plenty examples in this respect. During the war in Kosovo, a NATO jet erroneously dropped bombs on a convoy of Albanian refugees fleeing on tractors, resulting in a death toll of more than 80.

Newsweek summed up the whole story by its cover-page headline "Tragic Error". An error for which no one was held accountable, whatever the magnitude of the tragedy. I remember that headline, because I thought – my goodness, what would have happened if the tragic error was ours, if we had mistakenly hit the refugee convoy?

Or, let us not think only of the might of one side and its privilege of not having to pay for its own "errors", could you even imagine what the world reaction would have been had a Serbian jet fighter, by any chance, fired a guided missile at the satellite dish of one of Kosovo Albanian leaders, as a Russian jet did, killing Chechen separatist leader Dudayev?

However, the Serbian pilot, commander of his squadron, the entire command chain would end up in the dock, facing allegations of terrorism and war crimes.

Simply, that's our plight. We should not complain about that fact, though we have already wasted much time on it, but it is a lesson to be learned, we should understand where we belong in such a world and should try to protect our interests, watching every moment to make sure that we never find ourselves in a situation where we would have to face justice, while the others certainly would not.

In other words, Serbia does not wish to participate in any war, not even cold war.

It is neither equipped nor capable of that; for a long time we have been used to the fact that we are definitively the culprits in any war and responsible for every war, no matter which side we fought on and whatever our status at the end of it.

Even now, a hundred years after the First World War where we were, officially, among the winners, one of the favourite topics in the world is Serbian responsibility for the outbreak of WWI.

We wanted then and so many times after that to mete out justice, to avenge the small and the oppressed, to redress injustice... and at the end of this fight we lost as much as a third of our population. We decimated both our nation and its future. Let alone, creating Yugoslavia unnecessarily and having to bear the stigma of the culprit for the Great War even today.

Although we bore all this on our shoulders after that and every subsequent wars, the world was divided into spheres of influence by others, much bigger and mightier ones, who never asked us what we wanted.

Consequently, since we were blamed for wars, suffered human losses in them and lost, without ever being given anything in return, it is clear why we do not wish to partake in this continuous, never-ending war.

Serbia will not be another Gavrilo Princip of some new world order. This time, we are not going to shoot at anyone, whoever that may be – good or bad, coloured or white, an angel or its counterpart from the dark side.

This time, our job is peace. That is what we are committed and aspiring to, both in the region and the world, and we are ready to draw upon our more recent experiences, gained when after many years of intolerance and hostility, we decided to conduct a dialogue with Kosovo.

Therefore, we are ready to put our experiences in the service of peace and help find a compromise solution to any conflict, including the one in Ukraine.

After all, this commitment to peace and dialogue has opened to us the door to the European Union and made accession negotiations possible.

Since EU integration is our priority, not only politically but also essentially, in the years ahead, we will become day after day, closer and closer to what is called the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

For this reason, we pointed out more than once, from Prime Minister Vucic to myself, that we support the territorial integrity of every state, including Ukraine, meaning with with Crimea, as well.

This position is indisputable in Serbia today and it will continue to be so in the future.

It is indisputable in the same way as our European path.

However, we are very much aware that the decisions on major issues are not made by us.

For this reason, we have no dilemmas regarding the South Stream, for example. South Stream will be in place if Russia and the EU so decide and agree, irrespective of whether it is rejected or accepted by Serbia. Furthermore, Serbia is the only non-EU Member State which is on the South Stream route, with the exception of Russia itself.

In other words, Serbia will never evade fulfilling all the obligations it has undertaken and will undertake one day, as a full-fledged EU Member State. What Serbia is currently asking for is respect of the fact that it is not and will probably never be in a situation to impose sanctions against any country. Other countries, big and powerful ones, may impose sanctions on Serbia, but we are making an effort never to find ourselves in a position where we would be unable to avoid sanctions.

Therefore, we insist on dialogue and compromise in addressing all world crises, and will continue to insist on it also as the OSCE Chairmanship-in Office, in the coming year. Accordingly, hasn't Serbia – the part of territory of which was separated by force – demonstrated that the best way to deal even with such difficult and complex situations where it is hard to distinguish between international law and justice, is to sit down and talk. This, of course, will bring the never-ending cold war to an end, but can at least ensure some peace, making it possible for us not to take part in the cold war, thus avoiding to be the culprit again."