



Something interesting has been going on in our public arena. The position of Serbia, its military neutrality, its steady path towards the European Union and our clear orientation to having friendly relations with Russia, all of this, it appears, bothers certain individuals in Serbia more than anyone else worldwide.

A country which has successfully brought to an end its OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, which managed to stop the adoption of an UN resolution on Srebrenica, and which prevented Kosovo from joining UNESCO, is certainly not a country burdened by serious issues with regard to its foreign relations.

On the contrary, only by having a clear foreign policy position was it possible to have these successful achievements, and yet avoid potential dangers posed by taking a position on any issue these days.

However, some people in Serbia, appear to believe otherwise. This is where the whole mess about our relations with NATO arose from, although these relations had been to a large degree defined years before one could have even contemplated the formation of a Government like the incumbent one.

And all of a sudden strong words started to reverberate over Serbia, words such as "betrayal", as well as a chime of national bells rung by those who had long ago taken away those bells from Kosovo to a safer place.

But, let's not get all worked up while uttering unjustified excuses and oaths, let's once again, at least try to explain this – Serbia, NATO, the EU, Russia issue.

Firstly, Serbia is an independent, militarily neutral country and it will continue to be so. NATO is a military organization with a presence throughout our neighbourhood, as well as in Kosovo, and any refusal to cooperate with the Alliance would not only be unreasonable, but also, in its essence, represent a true betrayal of national interests.

If the safety of Serbs in Kosovo depends on NATO, we will have talks with NATO on a daily basis and enable them to arrive to Kosovo, where they have been protecting our people, as

soon as possible. Anything other than that would be gambling with the lives and safety of our people in Kosovo and Metohija.

This Government cannot afford to make, and it will not make, any unprofessional or adventurist steps. If the safety of Kosovo Serbs hinges on NATO, we will talk with NATO 24/7 and enable them to arrive to Kosovo, where they have been protecting our people, as soon as possible without any impediments. Any other behaviour on our part would be nothing but risking lives, not our own, but the lives of our fellow Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija.

Furthermore, NATO is a military alliance joined by almost all of the EU Member States, which is an organization we are headed for without any delay or exceptions.

To turn a blind eye to this fact would also be irresponsible, depriving our foreign policy of any rationality in its approach and of any thought being given to the future of its own.

This Government has no right to do that, either. No government has, if it cares for its people and country.

So – yes, we will endeavour to cooperate with NATO, in the scope defined by our Constitution which envisages that we should maintain the military neutrality of our country.

We will do our best to get the most out of this cooperation for the benefit of our country – spanning from new technologies to new forms of cooperation in areas of significance for our economy and creation of new jobs.

Furthermore, we will continue our cooperation with Russia and its armed forces in the same manner to the best of our interest, while making sure that such cooperation does not harm our friendship with any of the, albeit just currently, opposite poles in the global arena.

Finally, no one, not Russia, not NATO or the EU has absolutely nothing against such position of Serbia. Moreover, they respect and appreciate it, doing their best not to take any actions to jeopardize it.

In other words, there are no pressures or any other demands that would endanger and threaten such position of Serbia. All of the sides need Serbia just the way it is.

Except for certain persons in Serbia itself. They want to impose an orientation on it and typecast it. For their own, and not for the sake of Serbia.

They won't get away with it.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia