



Speech delivered by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic at today's ceremony on the occasion of celebration of Serbian Diplomacy Day:

"Dear guests,

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

It is my great honour and pleasure to address you on the occasion of Serbian Diplomacy Day. The Government of the Republic of Serbia decided last year that the 29th of May be marking the day in memory the Foreign Office of the Principality of Serbia that was established on 29 May 1839, which is considered to be the beginnings of professional diplomacy in Serbia.

The diplomatic service of our country followed the trends in the creation and development of Serbia as a state, sharing its destiny. In insurgent Serbia tasks related to foreign affairs were entrusted only to the most educated insurgents as were the Archpriest Mateja Nenadovic and Boza Grujovic, author of the first modern document in the history of Serbia that mentions the legal regulation of foreign policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs fosters the nearly 130-year-long tradition of training and professionalization of diplomats. Already in 1886, at the time of King Milan, the Law on the Diplomatic Service was passed, setting standards in the acquisition of proper knowledge and skills for diplomats.

The Law was valid till a new Enactment was adopted in 1919. This was the first legislative act which regulated criteria for entry into diplomatic service. Pursuant to the Enactment, the candidate diplomat had to be the subject of the Kingdom, to have done his military duty, to pass an entrance exam, speak French, has a degree of a domestic or foreign university and pass the diplomatic-consular exam.

Many leading figures such as Jovan Ducic, Milan Rakic, a volunteer in the First Balkan War and the first Serbian soldier who set foot in the liberated Pristina, Milos Crnjanski and Ivo Andric went through a specific process of education for diplomatic service. They all left significant mark

not only by their literature but on our diplomatic service as well.

Dear guests,

The world has experienced an unprecedented development in science and technology in recent decades. Every minute, almost every second, on an internet site or social network one could read some news, analysis, foreign policy assessment. Fifteen years ago, a distinguished Head of Diplomacy said he got more useful information while watching the news on the main TV stations than from the cables received by diplomatic missions worldwide. Consequently, the diplomatic profession began to be increasingly placed on the list of activities surpassed by time and dying out slowly in the 21st century.

Unfortunately, the global foreign policy trends have refuted these predictions in a most brutal way possible. We are witnessing that some trenches, which we all thought were interred a long time ago, are reopening and the subjects we thought were closed for ever are brought to the forefront again.

While preparing for the OSCE chairmanship in 2015, I read a lot of material dating back more than 40 years ago, the time of the CSCE. Among the documents was a speech delivered by the SFRY President Tito, which with minor corrections could be read at any multilateral meeting on security issues which is being held these days.

The present-day world is facing serious threats and challenges, the most serious certainly being terrorism. The threshold of tolerance and understanding of diversity is increasingly lowered. The readiness for confrontation is almost a given category.

It is in these, certainly not optimal and not excessively too optimistic terms, the time has come for the impassioned speeches and so-called simple solutions to very complex issues, to give way to diplomacy which, if judging by Wikipedia, represents "skills of negotiation between the states and peoples". I will not utter great wisdom if I say that many wars and losses of many lives could have been avoided if diplomacy had been given a chance and if only the negotiations and discussions took a little bit more time.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to note a number of foreign policy successful endeavours of the Republic of Serbia in the last twelve months since our first celebration of Serbian Diplomacy Day.

In the already described extremely complex foreign policy circumstances, a small but proud country such as Serbia succeeded, through coordinated activities of all foreign policy actors, in achieving foreign policy goals defined by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. I would highlight the OSCE chairmanship, which was met with unanimous praise and which was crowned by the successful final meeting held in Belgrade in December last year. No less important were the efforts to defend the rules and principles of international law, and justice as well, before the UNSC on the issues of certain resolutions, as well as before UNESCO in relation to the membership of the so-called Republic of Kosovo.

Over the past year, Serbia has received the highest marks by all relevant international factors for the economic and overall social reforms it has been implementing as well as for the extremely constructive approach in the refugee crisis and the role as the stabilizing factor in the SEE region. Its reputation and foreign policy position have been on the highest level since the beginning of the Yugoslav crisis.

That is why even today, when we are facing again almost the same issues and challenges as centuries ago, the foreign policy priorities of Serbia are well-known and will not change and such politics won the landslide and almost unrecorded majority in transitional societies. Serbia will not change its long-term foreign policy priorities. We will continue to conduct a policy aligned with our national interests. Our main foreign policy goals are the continuation of negotiations and full membership of the European Union but also fostering traditionally friendly relations with Russia, China, India, African countries and other friends as well as preserving regional stability and peace.

Foreign policy priorities of Serbia are well-known and long-term like in other well organized countries. Serbia will continue to pursue a predictable and responsible foreign policy, in the best interest of its citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for your cooperation that will hopefully be even more enriched and strengthened in the future.

Thank you."