



The following are the remarks by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic, at a ceremony marking the Serbian Diplomacy Day:

"Distinguished Excellencies,
Dear ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the ceremony marking the Serbian Diplomacy Day.

I am greatly honored and pleased to greet you and to congratulate the Diplomacy Day to all members of the Serbian Foreign Ministry.

The official ceremony marking this day is an expression of the necessity to clearly position diplomacy as an extremely important segment in the functioning of the Government and society. Moreover, it is an opportunity to sum up the results of Serbia's past foreign political activities.

By restoring the Museum of Serbian Diplomacy and the inauguration of its Day, the Serbian career diplomacy has returned to its roots – the Nemanjic diplomacy of Saint Sava pacifism, proud of the results achieved over the past four years. Let us mention just some of the results that have helped Serbia shift from being an object to becoming a partner and subject at the level of international politics: Serbian Chairmanship of the OSCE, diplomatic action "No to Kosovo in UNESCO", revocation of "Kosovo" recognition by some countries, mounting of the first exhibition on Jasenovac after WWII, at the United Nations Headquarters.

From its very inception, from the moment of realization that problems can and must be resolved peacefully instead through conflicts, diplomacy imposed itself as the supreme *modus operandi* in relations between rulers and States. Viewed within a historic perspective, the establishment and preservation of peace was not easy then, just as it is not easy now. Arriving at an optimum solution within realistic possibilities requires a lot of knowledge, skills, efforts and hard work. That is why our work in the Foreign Service is often invisible, albeit extremely responsible, important and exhausting. This is also why the diplomatic service requirements have quickly laid down the proper standards for all those who wish to engage in this profession. First and foremost, it is love of one's homeland, since diplomacy is about patriotism, extensive education, good communications skills, ability to read nuances and interpret them correctly, and an

unrelenting will to reach an acceptable solution through negotiations.

Dear friends,

The long and often turbulent history of the Serbian people and state has been fraught with many trials and tribulations for our diplomacy. We sought to respond to these permanent challenges which make this profession sensitive and unique, by knowledge, skills, experience and consistency. It is along these lines that the greatest names of the Serbian diplomatic and intellectual milieu gained prominence: Stojan Novakovic, Milos Crnjanski, Rastko Petrovic, Jovan Ducic, Branislav Nusic, Milan Rakic, Ivo Andric and many others in whom we take immeasurable pride. Still, in their shadow, there is a large number of career diplomats who have represented their country in an equally dignified manner.

Respecting its past and looking to the future with a great sense of responsibility, the Republic of Serbia today places the preservation of peace and stability at the core of its foreign policy, which is not a goal in itself, but a process and journey requiring commitment and continued efforts of all to maintain this situation. We trust and believe that the efforts and actions beneficial to peace and stability enable our country's economic development and progress, and the achievement of well-being for all our citizens. By profiling Serbia's foreign policy in this way and by promoting peace and stability, we are making an immense contribution to the improvement of relations in our neighborhood, for which we have been recognized in the entire international community as a reliable, responsible and predictable partner. With lasting commitment to peace and stability, we shall always be open for all talks, ideas and initiatives aimed at these imperatives. The evident increase of Serbia's reputation and a growing number of friends from across the globe validates best our positions and activities, to our great satisfaction.

The Republic of Serbia continues to pursue its European path as its foreign political priority, wishing to formally and meaningfully be more integrated in the family of European nations, where it has always belonged. We have made headway along the path, with new chapters opened in the course of our accession negotiations, but the process does not correspond to the pace of the instituted reforms, which we have been robustly implementing by embracing and applying the standards of more developed European countries. We are working committedly to become a full member of the European Union, while expecting the enlargement process to enter a new stage whereby the Republic of Serbia as a stable and reliable partner would contribute to the Union's strength. We truly believe that one of the fundamental values of the European Union, as one the largest peace project in the history, lies in the diversity and richness of its Member States which will be complemented by Serbia's accession. Our country is open to changes, which we are looking forward to, but we do not intend to give up our values. These values have essentially always been European, with certain distinctive features inherent in the Serbian national being.

When it comes to Kosovo and Metohija, we would like to clearly emphasize, as we have done many times before, our commitment to resolving this issue through dialogue, without either side being favored. Our resolve to continue the talks and our restrained response to recent provocations best illustrate our mature and wise approach. The democratic capacity of the Serbian society has been expressed, inter alia, through an internal dialogue on Kosovo and

Metohija, additionally strengthening the legitimacy of our position to reach a (mutually) acceptable solution exclusively through dialogue, without blackmail or imposition. It is of utmost importance that this is a two-way process. We expect the representatives of provisional institutions in Pristina to fulfill their share of agreed obligations as a necessary precondition for a successful outcome, to which we have been committed for years.

The Republic of Serbia has invested and will continue to invest maximum efforts to maintain its relations with neighboring countries at the highest possible level. It is of utmost importance that all channels of communication be used for further cooperation and exchange of views on current topics. We believe that a good business climate and stronger economic ties can be very useful for further reinforcement of the confidence-building process among the Western Balkan countries.

Moreover, we will continue to develop and restore the traditionally friendly relations with many countries from around the globe, such as Russia, China, United States, India, African, Latin American and the Middle East states. Our relations are based on mutual respect, support and desire to promote economic relations, for which there are realistic preconditions.

I was privileged to be the first Minister of Foreign Affairs to promulgate this Day in 2015 and today I shall have the honor to pay tribute to the individuals who have been working together with us on the Ministry's projects over the past years, by awarding them the Shield with the coat-of-arms of the Nemanjic Dynasty - the founders of the Serbian statehood, spirituality, enlightenment and diplomacy, for their contribution to improving Serbia's image and the protection of its vital interests.

Today the Knights of the Order of the Dragon – the Knights of Serbian diplomacy, will be men and women who particularly stand out in the area of preserving cultural identity, humanitarian work, endowments and preservation of the culture of remembrance of WWI and WWII victims: Roksanda Ilincic, Professor Ljiljana Markovic, PhD, Marina Arsenijevic, Arno Guyon, Mila Mulroney, Rebecca MacDonald, Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, Jelena Buhac Radojcic, Gojko Roncevic Mraovic, descendant of Field Marshal Stepa Stepanovic Dr. Ivana Lucic, descendant of Milunka Savic Dr. Slobodanka Grkovic, a descendent of Milunka Savic and Professor Rose Gojic Stephenson - a descendant of David Albala.

Believe it or not, some of the first diplomatic uniforms were designed by Milica Babic, wife of the Nobel Prize Laureate Ivo Andric, and were manufactured by Gucci. We have with us today Roksanda Ilincic, among others, whose fashion designs are worn by VIPs in more than 40 countries world-wide. Since women outnumber men in our Ministry, it may well happen that diplomatic uniforms by Gucci be replaced by the Roksanda-style creations for emancipated and successful lady diplomats.

Today we will also inaugurate an exhibition mounted by Marina Gavanski Zissis, an academy-trained painter and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Serbia in Canada, while Rosie Gojic Stephenson Goodnight and Professor Gideon Greif will present at the Faculty of Philology, a monography honoring the centenary of two major events: the day when the Serbian flag flew over the White House, and the centenary of the Balfour Declaration.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank to the survivors of Jasenovac concentration camp as well as to Professor Gideon Greif, an expert on Jasenovac and Director of the exhibition displayed at the United Nations, and the descendants of Field Marshal Stepa Stepanovic and Milunka Savic, for their cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the past four years.

Today is also a day when Professor Darko Tanaskovic, PhD, our distinguished Ambassador, will be awarded in recognition for his contribution to career diplomacy, which is a source of immense pride for me as Serbian Foreign Minister.

Dear friends,

Based upon success and lessons learnt, which impose an obligation on us, and in line with the current needs, I wish to underline that we shall continue to empower the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through further professionalization, modernization and rejuvenation of its diplomatic staff. This profession requires, in addition to extensive knowledge and skills a lot of sacrifice and despite common belief, the only privilege is personal satisfaction that remains with every diplomat knowing that he has worked in the best interest of his country and people.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Diplomacy Day and I would like to wish us all a successful and fruitful work.

Thank you for your attention.

Everything for Serbia – Serbia for nothing.

Long live Serbia!"