

## **SERBIA**

### **NIKOLIC MEETS WITH ABONGO MALIK OBAMA**

BELGRADE, August 18 (Tanjug) - Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic conferred with Abongo Malik Obama, president of the Barack Obama Foundation, and a delegation of the Balkan Club of Peace headed by Osmo Vatres in Belgrade on Saturday.

Greeting Serbian citizens, Abongo Malik Obama said that what matters is what we have in common and not the differences since this is the key to peace and stability, released the Serbian president's press office.

The president said that Serbia is now ahead of a period of development and prosperity, adding "we are on the way to the EU entrance, we are so determined not to recognize KosovoMetohija that we are even ready to endanger the EU pathway which is our future, but there is also something which is called pride".

Osmo Vatres, president of the Balkan Club of Peace, commended the efforts of the Serbian president, adding that in a short term he managed to break Serbia's deadlock. This is also the stance of Mr. Abongo Malik Obama, the people of Kenya and the entire Obama family, the statement reads.

Nikolic underlined that Serbia has many friends in the world and that the friendship between Serbia and Kenya will last as long as these two countries exist, adding that he will call on the Serbian government to raise the economic cooperation with Kenya to a higher level.

Abongo Malik Obama, founder and president of the Barack Obama Foundation, stated on Saturday after a meeting with Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic that the goal of his visit to Serbia and the Balkans is to promote peace. Obama is on a visit to the regional countries on the invitation of Osmo Vatres, president of the Balkan Club of Peace, and as he put it, his visit, mission and vision are unrelated to his younger halfbrother U.S. President Barrack Obama or anyone else. It is very important that we focus on what we have in common and not on what makes us different. The only way in which we can improve the lives of our people is to build up a peaceful atmosphere, he said after the meeting in the Presidency building.

Obama said that he and the Serbian president conferred on the relations between the African and the Balkan countries and their advancement. We agreed that these relations have existed for a long time and we also want to be sure whether these relations will be beneficial for our people, he said.

After visits to Skoplje, Gostivar and Belgrade, Obama and a Balkan Club of Peace delegation are scheduled to visit Novi Sad.

### **BATTLE OF CER - VICTORY THAT BROUGHT GLORY TO SERBIAN ARMY**

BELGRADE, August 19 (Tanjug) - On Monday, Serbia marks the 99th anniversary of the celebrated battle of Cer in which its army won the first allied victory against Austria-Hungary in World War One. The Austro-Hungarian army attacked Serbia from the direction of Bosnia-Herzegovina on August 12, 1914 and went on to take Sabac, but the Serbian forces made a strong stand at Mt. Cer, 35 kilometers from the city.

The first big confrontation occurred in the night between August 15 and 16 near the village of Tekeris, and the two armies continued to fight through August 20 along a 50-kilometer-wide front.

The Austro-Hungarian forces, commanded by Oskar Potiorek, had a strength of 200,000 men and modern artillery.

They went up against the army of the Kingdom of Serbia, whose supreme commander was Prince Regent Aleksandar Karadjordjevic and which had a force of 180,000 soldiers and unparalleled morale. On their way to victory, the Serbians were helped by a good strategy devised by the supreme command, along with their experience in modern warfare gained during the Balkan Wars.

During the night between August 19 and 20, the Austro-Hungarians were forced to retreat back into Austria-Hungary, and the so-called 'Cer Operations' ended on August 28, when the Serbian army re-entered Sabac and forced the enemy to flee across the Drina river.

About 25,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers were killed or wounded, and over 4,500 were taken as prisoners of war. Serbian casualties comprised a total of 16,045 non-commissioned officers and soldiers and 259 officers, with 2,107 of them killed and 250 taken as prisoners of war.

In his report on the Austro-Hungarians defeat, journalist Egon Erwin Kisch wrote: "Our army has been crushed and it is running away in utter disarray, in a wild and panic-stricken flight: a beaten army - no! an uncontrolled mob running towards the border in senseless panic."

"These Serbs are remarkable ... they know how to defend their land," Kisch said.

The way the Battle of Cer was fought and won is viewed as a masterpiece of the art of war, a remarkable example of transition from a strategic defense to a counter-offensive. Today, it is studied at major military academies across the world, including the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point.

As the most important operative group, the Serbian Second Army and its commander General Stepa Stepanovic played the key role in the battle. Stepanovic prepared a plan of action and sent a regiment to take control of the Cer ridge at the crucial moment, for which the prince regent awarded him the title of a duke.

Defending the homeland and the people from the Austro-Hungarian aggression, the Serbian army showed exceptional courage and patriotism which will remain engraved in the collective memory of the nation forever.

The news that the Serbian army defeated the Austro-Hungarian troops came as a surprise for the world public which did not expect a small country, exhausted by the Balkan Wars in the previous two years, to hold up against the major military force.

The victory added to the reputation of the Serbian army as it was also the first victory of the allied forces in World War I.

The Serb also victory helped the morale of the Atlantic forces which were losing battles on all battlefields at the beginning of the war.

Because of the Serbian victory in the Battle of Cer, Austria-Hungary was late in refocusing its troops toward the Eastern Front which later facilitated the operations of the allied forces.

## **SERBIA - NEIGHBOURS**

### **VUCIC: SERBIA, MONTENEGRO TURN TO FUTURE**

PODGORICA, August 17 (Tanjug) - Serbia and Montenegro have put all former differences and political disputes aside and turned to future, Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said in an interview for Radio and Television of Montenegro.

Vucic said that Serbia and Montenegro will provide support to one another on the EU integration

pathway with an expectation that both countries will join the EU in a few years. As for the upcoming visits of Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic to Podgorica and Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic to Belgrade, Vucic sees them as an opportunity to agree on cooperation on concrete projects, particularly in the areas of traffic and energy.

Vucic said that all Serbian bodies are working on the arrest of drug lord Darko Saric who is at large. Vucic said that he is surprised by accusations coming from Nebojsa Medojevic, official of the Montenegrin opposition party Democratic Front, that he and Dacic are protecting Saric, and that he is a member the Balkan criminal confederation. He said that he has never seen or talked to Saric, and for the reason he is not sure what Medojevic was talking about. Vucic said that he is afraid that some people are trying to ruin the relations between Serbia and Montenegro for personal political interests, adding that they receive money from certain tycoons. "Whether this money comes from (Miroslav) Miskovic or someone else, I cannot say with certainty at the moment, but I know that it is difficult to find any other motive in such a story," he said.

## **BELGRADE ASKS SKOPJE TO ABOLISH PROTECTIONIST MEASURES**

BELGRADE, August 16 (Tanjug) - The Serbian Ministry of Trade on Friday sent a written request to the Macedonian government asking if it plans to abolish limitations on the import of wheat and flour from Serbia, the Ministry told Tanjug. On Thursday, Serbian Minister of Trade Rasim Ljajic spoke over the phone with Macedonia's Agriculture Minister Ljupco Dimovski and once again requested that Macedonia abolish the controversial directive as soon as possible or Serbia will be forced to introduce countermeasures. The countermeasure will be determined in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and could be related to the export of seasonal fruits and vegetables and wine from Macedonia, it was said earlier.

At a meeting of the CEFTA committee in Belgrade on July 22, all CEFTA members put pressure on Macedonia to commit to abolishing the decision within a reasonable time frame, of a month to month and a half. Ljajic and Dimovski agreed in a meeting in Skopje on July 10 to initiate the procedure to amend the regulation.

The Macedonian government introduced the limitation on July 1. The decision states that Macedonian importers have to buy 3 kg of local wheat for every kilogram of wheat imported from other countries, including Serbia, and 4 kg of local wheat for one kilo of imported flour.

## **SERBIA - ECONOMY**

### **SERBIA NEEDS ARRANGEMENT WITH IMF**

BELGRADE, August 17 (Tanjug) - National Bank of Serbia (NBS) Governor Jorgovanka Tabakovic stated on Saturday that one of the first goals of Lazar Krstic, future minister of finance, will be signing an arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which Serbia needs besides its foreign currency reserves of EUR 10.7 billion.

Tabakovic told TV Pink that this arrangement is necessary not only for the loan, but also because the country needs a good advisor and controller. As for the government reshuffle, she said that the central bank should provide a stable framework for the implementation of the economic policy for the reshuffled government. "This implies adjustment of expenditures to realistic possibilities, and this is the most difficult task for the government to spend in line with the possibilities in conditions of high budget deficit which it has to finance," the governor said.

Speaking about the possibility of limiting the height of banks' interest rates, Tabakovic said that the NBS can only influence the reference interest rate, adding that in the market economy the administrative limitation of banking interest rates has almost never brought advantages for the citizens.

## **HYUNDAI TO MAKE NEW INVESTMENTS**

BELGRADE, August 16 (Tanjug) - Representatives of the South Korean company Hyundai expressed interest on Friday in strategic cooperation with Serbia, and announced that USD 400 million worth of investment would be made in the construction of communal litter processing plant, together with an investment in the factory for production of litter processing equipment. Guests from South Korea expressed interest in cooperation in agriculture, especially whole food production and vegetable processing. Although famous as a car production giant, during the talks with Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic on Friday Hyundai demonstrated interest in investing in other areas as well, primarily environment protection.

The South Korean company is present in Serbia since October 2002 with production and service network for its vehicles. Its sale increased ten times until today and it ranks third according to the sale of cars in Serbia.

Companies from Serbia and Hyundai are already cooperating as Yura company from South Korea has four factories of electric installations for South Korean vehicles Kia Motors and Hyundai, and it delivers over 60 percent of its total output to them. Yura invested over EYR 60 million in Serbia and employed over 5,000 people. Its exports totalled over EUR 120 million in 2012.

The Krusevacbased company Trayal is also one of Hyundai's business partners because it has a joint arrangement with Belshina company from Belarus for the delivery of 5,000 tyres to Hyundai's factory in Russia, and it has a plan for production of 120,000 tires to the Korean giant which will be sold under Trayal's name.

## **SERBIA - K&M**

### **DJURIC BELIEVES ELECTIONS IN KOSOVO WILL BE STATUS NEUTRAL**

BELGRADE, August 19 (B92) - "The Brussels agreement does not prejudice the sides' attitude toward the status issue, and the plan of its implementation defines the status neutral character of all actions arising from the basic agreement, including elections," Serbian president's adviser Marko Djuric has told the Belgradebased daily Danas. "The witness and guarantor of that is the EU, which has had the leading role in the process of the negotiations since the previous government removed the dialogue from the UN," he stated, and added: "Our ultimate aim is to get a strong (Serb) community and political institutions, the legitimacy of which will be recognized by all. In the medium and long term, it may very significantly strengthen our position, while the result of the election will be institutions on which nobody will have the right to impose a status that the interim institutions in Priština unilaterally declared."

Djuric also said the municipal elections in Kosovo scheduled for November 3 "do not mean a changing attitude towards the status issue for Serbia, but a step towards the political empowerment of the Serb community under very difficult circumstances."

## **VULIN: UNACCEPTABLE FOR UNMIK TO LEAVE KIM**

BELGRADE, August 16 (Tanjug) - Director of the Serbian government Office for KosovoMetohija (KiM) Aleksandar Vulin stated on Friday that Serbia considers it completely unacceptable for UNMIK to reduce the number of its troops in Kosovo or leave the province altogether.

Commenting on the statement of Kosovo Foreign Minister Enver Hodzaj that UNMIK should leave Kosovo, Vulin said that UNMIK is the guarantee of status neutrality of any agreement, which obviously does not suit Pristina. All institutions which maintain a status neutral stand constitute a problem for Pristina because it is hoping for recognition of independence by the international community and Serbia as well, Vulin said and reiterated that there will be no recognition of KiM independence and that for Serbia, Pristina is not a state, and neither is Kosovo.

He recalled, primarily addressing the international community, that UNMIK came to KiM by the will of the international community itself and the UN Security Council, and only on their instructions can UNMIK leave the province. Vulin noted that it is a wellknown fact that the UN Security Council is not even considering the possibility of reducing or withdrawing UNMIK troops from Kosovo.

According to him, UNMIK is an organisation which still has the biggest legal relevance for Serbia, and in keeping with the UN Security Council decision and the situation in the field, UNMIK is also the head of all international organisations in KiM. Sometimes UNMIK forgets to use the authorities it still has, Vulin said and added that he wants to remind the troops that their failure to use their powers does not mean that Pristina will be satisfied, it means that it will be happy only after UNMIK departs.