

SERBIA**DACIC RECEIVES FAREWELL VISIT FROM CHINESE AMBASSADOR**

BELGRADE, 28 December 2018 (Beta) - Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic on Dec. 28 received a farewell visit from Chinese Ambassador to Serbia Li Manchang and thanked him for his significant personal contribution to the further advancement of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Serbia and China during his term, the ministry said in a press release. Dacic thanked Ambassador Li, who is extremely well-versed in circumstances in the region, especially Serbia, which he is a great friend of, for excellent cooperation with the Foreign Ministry of Serbia over the past four years. He added that dialog was stepped up to the highest political level during Ambassador Li's tenure, and that relations between the two countries were at an historical apex, the press release noted. Dacic reiterated Serbia's gratitude for China's continued support to the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, stressing at the same time Serbia's consistent support to the One China policy, for which the ambassador thanked him especially. The Serbian minister was happy to note that economic relations had been advanced considerably, especially in infrastructure and investment, during Li's tenure. Ambassador Li thanked Dacic for excellent cooperation during his time in Serbia with the Foreign Ministry, especially for Dacic's personal assistance and support, whom he considers a great friend. At the end of the meeting, the Chinese ambassador delivered New Year's greetings to Dacic from Politburo member and director of the Office for Foreign Affairs of the Central Commission Yang Jiechi and state advisor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

VUCIC: PRISTINA TO ERASE BORDERS WITH ALBANIA BY MARCH

BELGRADE, 30 December 2018 (Beta) - Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Dec. 30 that Pristina's plan was to erase its border with Albania by March, when it would withdraw a decision on 100 percent customs duties on Serbian products in order to request a dialog from "a changed position." President Vucic said at a press conference in the Presidency that Pristina would eliminate the borders with Albania in several stages, and then try to present the international community with an accomplished fact. "They will do this by the end of March and when they erase the border, they will also lift the tariffs and say, now we are ready to negotiate, but from a different position - the position of a united Albania and Kosovo," Vucic said. The president said that the international community had been warned about this scenario before, but that it did not react. "Whenever we approach someone with this and ask for a reaction, the answer is: This is surprising, we did not see that coming, but we will try and react in line with our capabilities, after which you almost always get a big nothing," the president said. Vucic said that he would like to know how the international community would react to him releasing a statement saying that the border with Republika Srpska was being erased. He added that a strong Serbia obviously bothered someone. "Serbia can never be as small as they fear it might become an upright and proud country," Vucic said.

VUCIC MEETS WITH CHINA'S OUTGOING AMBASSADOR

BELGRADE, 30 December 2018 (Beta) - Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic met on Dec. 30 with China's outgoing ambassador to Serbia, Li Manchang, thanking him for dedicated work that

made it possible for Sino-Serbian relations to reach "an all-time high" during his term in office. A press release says that Vucic promised the ambassador a high-level national decoration honoring him for everything he had done for bilateral ties. The Serbian president said he hoped the Chinese diplomat would not wait too long before visiting Serbia again as he said, "a country that he has left an indelible mark on." Vucic thanked the Chinese leadership and the Communist Party for having decided to "build a strategic partnership and a friendship of steel" with Serbia. Ambassador Li said it was an honor and pleasure to represent China in Serbia, where he went to school, calling it a place that his family and he were attached to. The Chinese ambassador handed Vucic a season's greeting card from President Xi Jinping, and acquainted the Serbian president with a series of ideas and suggestions for new Serbian-Chinese projects, the press release said.

DJURIC: DECISION TO REMOVE BORDERS WITH ALBANIA UNVEILS PRISTINA'S SUPPORT FOR GREATER ALBANIA

BELGRADE, 30 December 2018 (Beta) - The director of the Serbian government's Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Marko Djuric, said on Dec. 30 that reports by Ramush Haradinaj and Albanian representatives about an agreement to remove border crossings between Albania and Kosovo revealed "support for a Greater Albania by the authorities in Pristina." "Every populist act of barbarity like this creates a fruitful soil for new conflicts, making a solution an even more distant prospect for the region," Djuric said in a press release, appealing to the international community to stop "Pristina's chauvinist euphoria," that had raised tensions again. Djuric also said that a decision to remove border crossings and checkpoints, which Haradinaj announced, was slated to take place next March, and called it a blatant violation of Pristina's international obligations, with unforeseeable consequences. "If Pristina and Tirana might want to hide the fact that the border between Serbia and Albania is 111 kilometers long, or pretend not to know that U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 not only does not foresee removing border crossings along the border with Albania but specifically prescribes the presence of the Serbian authorities there, then the international community should remind them of that," Djuric said. Ramush Haradinaj said on Facebook on Dec. 29 that "as of today, Kosovo's border with Albania no longer exists," Zeri quoted Haradinaj as saying. "It was an honor for me today to take part in signing an agreement to establish joint border points between Kosovo and Albania, according to the principles of integrated border management and our joint path to the EU," Haradinaj said.