



Speaking at the international roundtable "Serbian-American Relations", organized by Serbia-USA Parliamentary Friendship Group of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and the Institute for National and International Security, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic underlined that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government of the Republic of Serbia will continue to welcome the initiatives aiming to ensure a better mutual understanding as a starting point for further strengthening of Serbia-U.S. bilateral relations.

In opening his statement, the Minister proposed that all present observe a moment of silence and pay respects to the victims who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks against the USA, 19 years ago on this very date.

"This is an opportunity to recall that in view of extensive loss of life and material damage, the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack against the USA was one of the most tragic events of all time which shook the planet to the core and left major consequences", the Minister said.

Minister Ivica Dacic continued by emphasizing that shared history and closeness between our two nations in almost 140 year-long diplomatic history represent a special bond and good basis for further development of relations with the US, since we stood at the same side of history in many crucial moments, such as in the First and Second World Wars when we fought side by side.

"This time again I am proud to note the significance of all joint activities to commemorate the 100th anniversary since the day the Serbian flag was flown over the White House in 1918, both in Belgrade and Washington D.C. in 2018", Foreign Minister Dacic said.

Speaking of challenges, Ivica Dacic pointed out that the issue of the status of Kosovo and Metohija and the unilateral declaration of independence by Pristina are still major points of disagreement with the United States.

"However, even though we do not agree on this issue of vital importance to Serbia, our country highly appreciates the continued and strong support extended by Washington to the talks between Belgrade and Pristina. This support was best demonstrated last week when President Aleksandar Vucic paid a successful visit to Washington, D.C. at the invitation of Ambassador Grenell and U.S. President National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, and met with U.S. top officials as well as with the delegation of Pristina", Dacic said.

The First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister took the opportunity to note that there is a whole set of areas where the interests of our countries are in full alignment.

"I would like to underline in particular the strategic orientation of Serbia towards full membership of the European Union, for which we enjoy a constant and firm support of our American partners. Regional cooperation as well as bilateral cooperation with the United States continues also on challenges in connection with migrant crisis, combating organized crime and international terrorism. I would particularly like to highlight the state partnership programme between Serbia and the Ohio National Guard. From strictly military this cooperation is gradually expanding to civilian cooperation as well", the Minister said.

Finally, the Minister said that we should not forget the importance of Serbian diaspora in the United States – outstanding figures like Nikola Tesla and Mihajlo Pupin who brought Serbia and the United States closer together while their scientific achievements in addition to bringing our peoples together made an immeasurable contribution to mankind.

