

Interview by Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Hido Biscevic, to the Montenegrin news agency MINA, 20 October 2008

Journalist: Milan Žugić

Little Is Known About Democratic Role of NATO

Podgorica, (MINA) – The Public in the former communist countries knows little about democratic and strategic transformation of the NATO after the Cold War, and often sees it as an instrument of dominating politics of the United States of America, said Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council, Hido Biscevic.

He said that linking NATO to military intervention in Iraq and insecurities in Afghanistan was a reason that citizens of certain countries provided little support for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

“As much as this is complex, in a simplified perception, public knows little about democratic and strategic transformation of NATO after the Cold War, and sees the Alliance more as an instrument of dominating politics of the United States of America. Bearing in mind different perceptions of this politics, NATO is very often a suffering party,” said Biscevic to *MINA* Agency.

He said that when all actors within a “crisis or potentially still a crisis area sit down to the same table and share the same values and joint responsibility for peace and security, any risks to peace and security are less probable.”

“NATO membership today primarily means affiliation to a family which shares the same values of free democratic world. This membership is not a ticket to a club of some conflicting world, it is levelled against no one, on the contrary, it means expanding the platform of the same values of democracy, freedom, human and minority rights, and overall rule of law,” said Biscevic.

In his words, Euro-Atlantic and European integrations are interlinked processes, especially with the reference to security positioning of Eastern Bloc countries.

Each country individually, said Biscevic, makes decisions on integration priorities, always depending on a kind of its own political and security heritage.

“However, speaking of former members of the Eastern Bloc, from the Baltic to the Balkans, and considering all their individual differences, the subject matter in the last two and a half decades was and remains to be their identical aspirations and commitments,” he said.

Asked about the extent to which the decision of Podgorica to recognize Kosovo's independence would influence stability in the region, Biscevic said that one should not waste words on explaining that Kosovo is a sensitive issue from whatever aspect considered.

Biscevic believes that Podgorica's decision is motivated by the orientation that there is a new reality and that the road which lead to this reality can be described and assessed in a different ways.

"It seems to me, that Podgorica was motivated by an assessment that, giving consideration to these realities and building new relation, could be of help and serve as an incentive to everyone, i.e. to both Pristina and Belgrade, to continue with the politics that will eventually, from their side too, contribute to this part of Europe participating in completion of a big project of European unification," said Biscevic.

He believes that the subject matter is an independent decision of the Government which recognizes a wider political context within which it operates. "But which is surely not prepared to accept some carrot and stick policy which, after all, is not EU or NATO policy."

Biscevic said that Belgrade's diplomatic moves to proclaim ambassadors of Montenegro and The Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia persona non grata following the recognition of Kosovo's independence were expected.

"It is important to maintain restraint and more importantly not to allow some powers to try to use such situations to restore some old and hopefully forever overcome statuses. I wish to bring the attention to the big importance of recent statement given by President Boris Tadic that Serbia would never influence politics of its neighbours," said Biscevic.

In his words, Irish "no" to Lisbon Treaty may influence the pace of EU enlargement.

"However, I believe that the rush of crisis topics the world is facing will only accelerate the responsibility of the European Union and strengthen the awareness on the need for agreement," concluded Biscevic.

(End) zug/del