

Lest We Forget 1999 -- NATO's Illegal War on Yugoslavia. The 2019 Belgrade Declaration

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international / prose / post

On the occasion of 20th anniversary of the aggression of NATO Alliance against Serbia (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the FRY), on 22nd and 23rd March 2019 Belgrade was the venue of the International Conference under slogan NEVER TO FORGET, and title "Peace and Progress instead of Wars and Poverty". The Conference was attended by more than 200 distinguished guests from some 35 countries from all over the world, whom the organisers welcomed and expressed sincerest gratitude for their solidarity, support and huge humanitarian relief during one of the most challenging periods in the recent history of Serbia and the Serbian nation.

The program of activities marking this anniversary was dedicated to preserving the lasting memory and paying tribute to the military and the police personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of their country against the aggression, as well as to the civilian victims including the very young, the very old, and the ailing victims killed during this 78-day aggression by NATO.

The participants have unanimously condemned NATO aggression, affirming that in its essence it was an illegal, invading and criminal war against a peaceful sovereign European country, waged without the UN Security Council mandate and under brute violation of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final (1975) and the basic principles of international law.

By attacking Serbia (the FRY), the leading Western powers championed by the USA had exposed the freedom-loving and justness-oriented Serbian people to anguish, devastation, and lasting suffering for the sake of attaining their imperialistic geopolitical aims for control of natural and energy resources, the road of transport and the sphere of influence. This was neither 'a small war' nor 'a humanitarian intervention', but rather a war of underlying geopolitical goals for the long-term deployment of the US troops in the Balkans, for the establishment of case precedent for future aggressions, and for the toppling of legitimate governments, all within the Eastbound Expansion Strategy and the overall goal of setting the global dominance. The history will note the fact that, back in 1999, blindly following alien geopolitical interests, Europe fought itself.

The Balkan is today more unstable. Europe is even more divided. Europe's backtracking to itself requires some soul-searching, courage and the vision, including confession that the attack against Serbia (the FRY) in 1999 was a colossal historical error.

The aggression's masterminds and executors should be held responsible for their crimes. The aggression killed some 4,000 persons (including 79 children), whereas additional 6,500 people were seriously wounded. Direct material damage amounted to US 100 billion. It was stressed that NATO and its members participating in the aggression had duty to compensate the war damages to Serbia.

The participants of the Conference were informed about the findings of scientific and expert analyses conducted so far, all confirming that the use of ammunition filled with depleted uranium, and of graphite and cluster bombs and other inflammable and toxic means of warfare, have resulted in high levels of the long-term environmental pollution and the massive-scale endangering of the

Serbian citizens. They welcomed the establishment of special bodies of both the national Assembly and of the Government of Serbia tasked with determining the consequences of NATO aggression reflected on the health of population and the safety of environment, and expressed support to the work of those bodies.

The forcible and unlawful tearing Kosovo and Metohija off Serbia continues, through the constant pressuring of Serbia to formally acknowledge the splitting off of a part of territory of its State. Participants of the Conference underscored that a forcible taking of Kosovo and Metohija apart from Serbia would become a precedent which, in turn, would inevitably pave the way for drawing the new borders in the Balkans and the creation of the so-called Greater Albania at the expense of territories of the states of Serbia, North Macedonia, Greece, and Montenegro, what must not be permitted.

NATO aggression against Serbia (the FRY) was a direct and simultaneous attack on the peace and security system in Europe and in the world, which has been constructed on the outcome of the Second World War. As conclusively demonstrated by the subsequent interventions of the USA and its allies (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria, etc.), this aggression has served as case-precedent and template to globalize the interventionism, a manual on how to utilize terrorism and separatism to carry out the Western powers' plans of conquest, in order to forcibly topple 'unsuitable' regimes and impose geopolitical interests of the West, notably, of the USA.

NATO aggression against Serbia (the FRY), an act of most blatant violation of fundamental principles of the international law, is unjustifiable; aggressor's responsibility cannot be diminished by hypocritical attempts to transfer responsibility onto Serbia or her that-time state leadership. This NATO aggression made history as an indicator of moral and civilisation decline that, twenty years on, the governments of the leading aggressor countries have neither been pardoned, nor gotten to learn the right lesson from.

Participants of the Conference expressed their strong support to, and solidarity with efforts Serbia invests in remedying the grave and lasting consequences of the aggression and to her striving to prevent the continuation of NATO aggression by other means. They explicitly supported Serbia's efforts to preserve own sovereignty and territorial integrity and her contribution to resolve the future status of Kosovo and Metohija, which will be in line with international law and Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council. They denounced the policy of coercion, pressures, and unilateral steps.

The aggressors' responsibility for the committed crimes and the inflicted damage cannot be either justified or diminished. Serbia is entitled to seek indemnification, and legal and criminal culpability of NATO leaders and the responsible members. Demand was made to immediately prosecute all those responsible for the crimes against the Serbian nation, and in particular for the case of illicit trafficking in human organs harvested from the abducted Serbs, in accordance with the Report of Disk Marty and relevant decision of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe..

The aggression of 1999 against Serbia (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and its other more recent military interventions have transformed NATO into an openly offensive military alliance, which is responsible for the present-day Balkans and Europe being more discordant and volatile, for militarization of Europe and of international relations, for reaching the lowest point of distrust and confrontation since the Cold War, and for the thoroughly shaken the global security order.

NATO is but a tool of the military industry complex and the largest capital domination, rather than a tool of peace, peoples' needs, and progress. This is why NATO, a Cold War relic, should be dissolved and foreign military camps abolished, including military base Bondsteele in the Serbian Province of

Kosovo and Metohija.

Participants of the Conference held that the world was going through period of growing distrust, tensions, and threats of new interventions and conflicts. The root causes are the aggressiveness of NATO and of alienated power centres, whose interests benefit from violations of fundamental principles of the international law, escalation of threats, renewed arms race, and militarization of international relations.

The participants have condemned all method of abuse of international institutions such as: United Nations, OSCE, UNESCO, WTO and others, demanding their improvement and strengthening, not weakening and bypassed.

The policy of domination based on military might, typical of unipolar world order, was rejected as unacceptable because being founded on privileges and self-proclaimed excellence and not on equality of all countries and nations. Multi-polarisation excludes dominance and opens window for democratisation of international affairs. The Conference sent an appeal to all peaceful forces in the world to join forces in the struggle for the observance of the international law as based on the UN Charter, for reinforced role of the United Nations and other universal international organisations.

Participants of the Conference unanimously demanded to urgently put an end to a new arms race and violation of relevant international agreements, and to redirect the funds from the military budgets into the domains of economic development, improving quality of people's life, and eliminating the disheartening developmental and social divergences. They expressed profound concern provoked by unilateral USA withdrawal of the valid international agreements particularly of Intermediate range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF). They demanded for full respect of the existing agreements, and renewal of negotiations on stopping arm race, particularly nuclear. They demand full withdrawal of the US tactical nuclear weapons and missile defense assets from Europe that are worsening of the security on the European continent.

It was held that the imperialism system with its insatiable greed for someone else's wealth, and unipolar order based on the strategy of exceptionality, dominance and NATO interventionism, are the key sources of instability, distrust, and conflicts. Peace, stability, democracy, inclusive progress, require radical changes in global relations, observance of sovereign equality, non-interference, multiculturalism, common interests, and exclusion of any egotism, protectionism, and privileges.

A statement was made that the imperialistic system, with its inherent insatiable greediness for other nations' riches, and the unipolar order based on the strategy of exceptionalism and dominance, and NATO interventionism, are the key sources of instability, distrust, and conflicts. Peace, democracy, and progress require radical changed in global relations, observance of sovereign equality, non-interference, and multiculturalism. Stability, peace, and inclusive progress require observance of common interests, partnership, and exclusion of any egotism, protectionism, and privileges. Policy of confrontation, interventionism, and interference in the internal affairs, prompted by the military industry complex and big financial capital must give way to dialogue, partnership, observance of the basic norms of international law and international order, which are based on the common interests and mutual respect.

Participants of the Conference committed to peaceful political solution of all international problems, under observance of principles of international law, the UN Charter, and the decisions of the UN Security Council.

Belgrade, 23th March 2019.

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