



NOT TO FORGET! 1999 – 2024. THE BELGRADE DECLARATION

WE, participants of the International Conference held in Belgrade on March 22-24, 2024, on the occasion of marking the 25th anniversary of NATO's armed aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) dedicated to the theme "From the Aggression to a New Just Order", gathered from all over the world, hereby declare:

We belong to different countries, nations, ideologies, religions and civilizations, but stand firmly united in our commitment to peace, equality, and prosperity for all peoples, as well as in our condemnation of interventionism, expansion, domination, and hegemonism.

We firmly condemn the unprovoked armed aggression by NATO against the FRY (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1999 as an unlawful, invading and criminal war against a sovereign, peace-loving European country, waged devoid of a UN Security Council mandate, in blatant violation of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act (1975) and the fundamental principles of international law.

We underline:

That the aggression was carried out under false pretexts and that therefore NATO's responsibility cannot be diminished. It was not state authorities but, instead NATO's expansionism that actually threatened a 'humanitarian disaster'. What happened in Rachak was not a 'massacre of civilians', but instead legitimate response of the state to terrorism. The 'Horseshoe Plan' did not exist. 'Humanitarian' wars or interventions do not exist. Prevention of human suffering can hardly be achieved by destruction of homes and

hospitals, use of depleted uranium and cluster bombs, by poisoning air, soil and water.

Back in 1999, NATO reintroduced the war on the European soil, ironically, a war that Europe waged on itself.

It was neither a “little Kosovo war”, but rather a war of these geopolitical goals: a) carving the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija out of Serbia and a full control over the Balkans; b) deployment of the US troops in the Balkans for the purposes of the strategy of Eastward expansion; c) creating a precedent for subsequent interventions conducted in violation of international law and of the inviolability of the UN Security Council; d) justifying the existence of NATO and its acting beyond the area defined in its Founding Act of 1949. “Wherever the law presented obstacle to the policy of expansion, it must be removed” – was yet another NATO new rule.

The NATO aggression embodied the undoing of the legal order of peace and security in Europe and the world, established on the outcome of the Second World War. Today, the Balkans is more unstable, Europe militarized on dangerous tracks, without autonomy, identity and vision.

The aggression took lives of 1,139 soldiers and police officers, about 3,000 civilians also including 89 children, while some 10,000 people were wounded. However, the consequences of prolonged effects of weapons filled with depleted uranium and toxic compounds are by far greater.

NATO, also, bombed the Embassy of the PR of China, in Belgrade, killing three Chinese journalists and destroying the building of the Chinese Embassy.

We pay our highest respect to all the fallen innocent people and express our deepest, sincere condolences to their families.

The aggressor had been systematically destroying or badly damaging civilian infrastructure, such as railways, roads, bridges, airports, energy system, as well as apartment buildings, industrial facilities, schools, hospitals, kindergartens, and many more objects. Over thirty radio and TV stations and transmitters had been bombed including the national public TV RTS killing 16 professional employees on duty. The direct damage totals some USD 100 billion.

We emphasize that NATO and its member states, participants in the illegal act of aggression, are obliged to compensate Serbia for the war damage they have inflicted.

We appeal that special state and expert bodies, tasked with determining the consequences of aggression on the health of people and the environment, resume their work, and that the war crimes against civilians and crimes of non-compliance with the war-related conventions be prosecuted and sanctioned.

We express our strong support and solidarity with Serbia's efforts to mitigate the consequences of the aggression and her endeavoring to prevent the continuation of NATO's armed aggression by other means.

We express our full support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia in her internationally recognized borders within which she continued her membership in the UN, the OSCE, and other universal international organizations.

We are deeply concerned about the mass-scale violation of the basic human rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija embodied in continuation of their systematic expulsion from, and in preventing the free and safe return of over 250,000 expelled Serbs and other non-Albanians to, their homes and property.

We firmly believe that the future status of the Province of Kosovo and Metohija may be resolved only in accordance with international law and, in particular, with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, which is lasting, legally binding document. We demand that all provisions of the UNSC resolution 1244 be fully respected and implemented.

We condemn each and all violations of that Resolution and the policy of blackmail and pressuring, and all one-sided steps aimed at legalizing the seizure of state territory and completing the ethnic cleansing of the remaining Serbian population, in preparation to create the so-called Greater Albania.

We oppose the unipolar world order based on the strategy of hegemonism and global domination with NATO as its military feast. The aggression against the FRY in 1999 was speeding up of the strategy of expansion to the East, and a source of danger to peace in Europe and the world. At the time of the aggression, NATO had 19 members, and today counts 32. After the erection of

US military base Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo and Metohija, there followed dozens of new NATO bases. Presently, Europe hosts a far larger number of foreign military bases and stockpiles of nuclear weapons than it did during the bipolar world and the Cold War era.

We express our deepest concern about the accelerated escalation of hostilities and conflicts in global relations that add fuel to the fire of conflict, continued provocations, and the looming danger of a global conflict. The world sits on the brink of the abyss. Humanity will either restrain the rampant aggressiveness of the alienated power centers, or fall into that abyss.

This makes us stand unified in the demand for an immediate beginning of the dialogue at the strategic level, under the auspices of the UN, aimed at putting to a halt the escalation, the accumulation of conventional and nuclear weapons, and the breaching of international agreements.

We demand the closure of foreign military camps, the complete withdrawal from Europe of the US tactical nuclear weapons and installations of the so-called anti-missile defenses that make security more volatile.

We call for an end to war-mongering rhetoric, and invite all responsible statesmen to resort to dialogue and to finding peaceful, just and sustainable solutions to the ongoing conflicts and crises.

We appeal to all peace-loving forces in the world to join forces in the struggle for the observance of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, reinforcing the authority and role of the United Nations and other universal international organizations, the observance of principles of equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism and separatism as global threats.

We support the process of multi-polarization of global relations and their democratization on the basis of the sovereign equality of all states and peoples.

We support the peace, security and development initiatives that are based on the principle of mutual indivisibility of peace, security and development, and that take note of the root causes of problems. The key roles in that process play BRICS, EAEU, Global Initiative "Belt and Road", Shanghai Cooperation Organization, NAM. We support the abolition of all monopolies, privileges based on 'exceptionalism'. We refuse unilateral sanctions, erection of new

'walls' or divisions. Attempt to divide the world into 'democracies' and 'autocracies' is a trickery of the power-centers designed to extend the life of the unipolar world order.

The policy of confrontation, interventionism, and interference in internal affairs, backed by the military-industrial complex and large financial capital, must give way to dialogue, partnership, respect for fundamental norms of international law and the multi-polar world order.

Peace, stability, democracy and inclusive development require radical changes in present global relations, observance of sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, multilateralism, respect of common interests, and exclusion of any egoism, protectionism and privileges of the past.

The biggest obstacle to the world order of sovereign equal nations is the relics of the Cold War. That is why NATO should be dissolved and the doctrine of hegemonism, expansionism and neo-colonialism consigned to history.

We condemn the mass-scale killing of the innocent Palestinian people, in particular of children, and call for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and other areas inhabited by the Palestinian people, in order to finally stop this human suffering unprecedented in recent history, and for unhindered delivery of food, medicines, water, and other necessities of life to the vulnerable population.

We support a two-state solution, the free and safe return of all expelled persons, the abolition of the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state within the pre-June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital, all in accordance with the United Nations Resolutions.

We express our solidarity with the people of Cuba who have been suffering the devastating consequences of the unilateral US embargo for many years. The Cuban people have an inalienable right to choose the paths of internal development of their own, without external interference. We demand respect for the UN positions on the lifting of the US blockade of Cuba, and the removal of Cuba from the list of 'states sponsoring terrorism' because it was inserted without any bases.

We hold that the Ukrainian crisis is a corollary of NATO's strategy of expansion to the East, under betrayal of all agreements of the otherwise.

We believe this crisis can be resolved peacefully, by acknowledging and removing the causes and by guaranteeing equal security for all countries. The common future of humanity excludes egotism and selfish approaches such as the 'golden billion' security thesis.

We express our acknowledgment and gratitude to our hosts – the Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals, the Club of Generals and Admirals of Serbia, SUBNOR of Serbia, the Diaspora Fund for Serbia, and the Association of Veterans of the Military Intelligence Service, as well as to the citizens of Serbia – for their hospitality and good organization of the Conference.

The organizers express their acknowledgment to the participants of the Conference, including the World Peace Council and all its members, for their decades long solidarity and support to Serbia and the Serbian people, as well as for their extraordinary contribution to the results of this Conference.

Belgrade, March 23, 2024