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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA'S FUTURE IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGES ON THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCENE

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Abstract: Although the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended almost two decades ago, the political situation and relations in this country are still very complex, which destabilizes the situation and prevents the establishment of the stable and sustainable political system. Exclusive national politics dominate the whole BiH, which prevents integration of the institutions at all levels and limits the capacity for political reforms. Considering the fact that there is no internal consensus regarding the large number of important issues, BiH remains completely dependent on the international institutions which are basically deciding of its future. For this reason, developments in international relations and the balance of power in world politics influence Bosnia and Herzegovina more than they influence other countries in the region. Considering the huge changes which have affected international political scene and which will contribute, more and more, to the creation of the multipolar world, BiH will inevitably face uncertain future that will, to a large extent, depend on the balance of power in international relations.

Key words: *Bosnia and Herzegovina, international relations, Dayton Agreement, political relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, international political scene.*

INTRODUCTION

Although the civil war ended almost twenty years ago, the current Bosnia and Herzegovina could hardly be described as a stable state, let alone as a sustainable one; to be more precise, what is keeping BiH alive is a complex and overstuffed apparatus of international institutions that vowed to preserve “multicultural“ society at any cost. What would happen or what is to happen when international institutions headed by the High Representative leave this region is a question that is difficult or even impossible to answer. The main problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in the fact that neither political parties nor major ethnic groups, that have the status of constituent nations, share a joint vision of the state. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there is no consensus regarding crucial state and political issues, and if there is something that all three constituent nations agree about, it is the wish for independence in the decision making process concerning important national issues, and what is most important, preventing others (local ethnic communities) from deciding on such matters.² Hence, the political integration of the state is quite uncertain and

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² Jelena Vukočić, „Identitet i država – Etnički konflikti i unutrašnji (ne)legitimitet Bosne i Hercegovine“ (Identity and the State – Ethnic Conflicts and Internal

BiH is still fully dependent on the strong international presence. However, what is of major importance for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region of Southeast Europe is the fact that the international community is also going through the period of major changes, and the relations within it considerably differ from those that existed during the war in BiH and the signing of the Dayton Agreement. Dynamic and turbulent tendencies on the international political scene over the past two decades have already resulted in the significant changes in political and economic relations among major and regional powers, i.e. in establishing a new balance of power, and it is quite certain that this process shall continue in the future. Former unilateralism and impunity of policy of the only remaining post-Cold War superpower gradually and yet, quite certainly, give way to the new balance of power. The USA with its NATO and EU allies still represent the most powerful political, economic and military power, however, they are no more omnipotent as they were after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The focus of economic and financial power has been mostly shifted from the West to the East, as China is already taking over the role of the most powerful economic power from the United States which, in the long term, shall certainly have major impact on international relations and balance of power.

In such situation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which since its formation has had the status of an international protectorate, undoubtedly faces an uncertain future that will largely depend on the development of relations on the international political scene. Considering the obvious inability of the local political leaders to reach a consensus regarding the most important state issues and thus set up a functional state union, BiH remains largely dependent on the international politics and decisions made in the world centers of power that concern its future, and also on power politics by which the international community so far managed to prevent the deepening of the political crisis and potential breakup of Bosnia and Herzegovina on ethnic lines.

THE IMPACT OF CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BIH

Ever since the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed, the US has played the dominant role in its politics “assisted“by Western European countries. The policy of the US and their European allies in BiH, as well as their policy in other hotspots throughout the world, was never in compliance with international law and the interests of local people, but only with geo-strategic, political and economic interests of the greatest world power and its satellites. As Nenad Kecmanović observed, “the same as politics transformed into a Machiavellian struggle for winning, preservation and expansion of power by becoming separated from ethics in the modern era, the post-modern formation of the unipolar world transformed international law into the super power’s right to ignore such law and the right of the majority of states to hopelessly invoke it. This is no longer about the fact that international organisations and institutions never used global monopoly of legitimate violence in order to secure compliance with legal standards and political decisions that surpass a single state, but it is about the fact that those

(Un)Legitimacy of Bosnia and Herzegovina), *Godišnjak fakulteta političkih nauka*, god. 7, br. 12, Beograd, decembar, 2014, str. 80; o: Nenad Kecmanovic, *Nemoguća država – Bosna i Hercegovina (Impossible State – Bosnia and Herzegovina)*, Filip Višnjić, Beograd, 2007.

international organisations and institutions only serve as a cover-up for various manifestations of unmasked super powers“.³

The global economic crisis, major safety issues in the Middle East and in one part of the African continent, the Ukrainian crisis, as well as the shift in the balance of power on the international political scene, however, over the past few years partially “diverted“ the US and the entire Western world’s attention from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a situation in which it is obvious that the focus of the West will tend to turn to the East, and that the political struggle for power, resources and domination would largely take place out of the Southeast European region, it remains to be seen how the new situation will affect overall political and national relations in BiH and its fragile political stability. On the one hand, BiH political leaders will likely have to deal more with each other and the inner issues, in an attempt to reach long-term compromise solutions that will observe legitimate rights and interests of all constituent nations and other national communities. On the other hand, there is also a possibility that in the newly developed situation caused by tectonic changes on the international political scene, some other international actors may try to expand and intensify their strategic and political influence in the Balkans, and thus in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This, above all, refers to Turkey that has been demonstrating increased interest in BiH for some time now, in addition to the other Balkan regions with Muslim population. However, the interests of Russia, Vatican and various political stakeholders within Western (particularly American) political systems, that operate in accordance with various (mostly financial) interests, should not be underestimated, and it should be emphasized that they are neither completely harmonised nor in conformity with the official policy of their countries. These “mixed“ influences have been limited so far, considering the absolute domination of the international institutions controlled by the US and EU. However in the future, in the case of further distancing of the West from BiH, they may receive the more important role on the political scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

USA, WESTERN EUROPE AND POLITICAL RELATIONS IN BIH

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as we know it today, is the result of the Dayton Agreement signed under the patronage of the United States of America and their European allies. The Dayton Agreement put an end to the civil war in BiH and set the foundations of a decentralised state structure consisting of two entities and three constituent nations.⁴ Nevertheless, soon after the signing of the Agreement, the attempts to undermine it were initiated by the very same states that actually drafted it and imposed it on the parties involved in the conflict. American and European officials who participated in the peace negotiations in BiH never, actually, considered the Dayton Agreement as a

³ Nenad Kecmanović, „Srbija i Srpska iz Sarajevske perspektive“ (Serbia and Srpska from Sarajevo’s Perspective), *Zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa: Republika Srbija i Republika Srpska – Stari i novi politički izazovi* (A Collection of Works from the Scientific Convention: Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska – Old and New Political Challenges), Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Fakultet političkih nauka u Banjoj Luci i Predstavništvo Republike Srpske u Srbiji, Beograd, 2014, str. 29.

⁴ For more information on the Dayton Agreement refer to: Robert M. Hayden, *Skice za podjeljenu kuću – Ustavna logika jugoslovenskih sukoba* (Blueprints for the House Divided – The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts), Samizdat B92, Beograd, 1999.

final solution, but it rather represented the tools to put an end to the war only to embark on the “creation of the state“ that would suit their political and geo-strategic interests. The amendments to the Dayton Agreement in compliance with the policy of the West towards the former SFRY states were aimed at the transfer of powers from the entities to the state institutions, i.e. centralisation of power at BiH level and institutional disempowerment and weakening of the Republic of Srpska. As Nenad Kecmanović pointed out, “the implementation of the “Dayton spirit“ instead of the “Dayton provisions“, introduction of the so-called Bonn powers for the High Representative in addition to the US and EU pressure on the political elite in BiH were undoubtedly aimed at the strengthening of central power at the expense of the Republic of Srpska’s autonomy. The UN/EU High Representatives in BiH, particularly Wolfgang Petritsch and Paddy Ashdown, by depriving the entities of their powers, by increasing the number of state ministries in the Council of Ministers and by imposing laws, until 2006 managed to finish a great deal of the work, so one can actually say that what we have now is “Dayton Part Two“in progress that is applied instead of the “original Dayton“. ⁵ The United States of America and the European Union initiated the adoption of amendments to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006 and 2009 with the purpose of transferring the power to the state institutions, however, all under the motto of “accelerating Euro-Atlantic integrations“. After the failure of the “Butmir package of constitutional amendments“, in autumn of 2009, the Western pressure on BiH was somewhat eased which by no means signified that the US and EU attitude towards BiH and its constitutional design changed, but rather that the circumstances on the international political scene went through some changes. The Western powers’ attitude to Bosnia and Herzegovina was changed mostly because their interests and activities were changed. Global economic and political crisis, that considerably diverted the US and Europe’s attention, contributed to the fact that their diplomats and officers were left with fewer opportunities and powers to impose solutions. To put it simply, a unique political will, that existed in the period after the signing of the Dayton Agreement and that supported undemocratic and aggressive behavior primarily and above all of the High Representative, but also of other international factors, was lost.

Arrogance, undemocratic and aggressive behavior of some High Representatives, particularly Paddy Ashdown, also resulted in numerous negative comments coming from non-governmental organisations and public intellectuals in the West, which somewhat caused the US and Western Europe’s perception of Bosnia and Herzegovina to change. Anyhow, the support for building democracy in BiH by using undemocratic and aggressive methods has now been lost. ⁶ According to some EU policy experts, economic

⁵ Nenad Kecmanović, „Srbija i Srpska iz Sarajevske perspektive“ (Serbia and Srpska from Sarajevo’s Perspective), *Zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa: Republika Srbija i Republika Srpska – Stari i novi politički izazovi*(A Collection of Works from the Scientific Convention: Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska – Old and New Political Challenges), Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Fakultet političkih nauka u Banjoj Luci i Predstavništvo Republike Srpske u Srbiji, Beograd, 2014, str. 30.

⁶ Obrad Kesić, „SAD, Evropa i Dejtonski mirovni sporazum“ (The USA, Europe and the Dayton Agreement), *Nova srpska politička misao – Petnaest godina Dejtonskog sporazuma i budućnost Republike Srpske* (New Serbian Political Thought – Fifteenth Anniversary of the Dayton Agreement and the Future of the Republic of Srpska), Đorđe Vukadinović (ur.), Nova srpska politička misao, Beograd, 2011, str. 167.

crisis within the EU itself, as well as the other issues that this union has been facing, may have adverse effects on the political stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Slobodan Samardžić noticed, “today, when the European Union has been preoccupied with its major inner crisis, it is becoming less and less capable of preserving the appearance of certainty of joining EU as a significant tool of its foreign policy in the so-called “Western Balkans“. For BiH and the Republic of Srpska this fact of prolonged duration and continuous validity can be a sword that cuts both ways. On the one hand, for the EU it may signify a greater extent of accepting reality in BiH, but also the reality in the relations between the EU and BiH. As a mainly European problem, BiH would stand chances of surviving as a state, provided that it accepts the optimum significance of the Dayton Agreement that guarantees the greatest value that living in a community can provide – peace. For all political actors in BiH it would mean that they could primarily turn towards themselves and their own inner and yet common problems with minimal, but realistic, instead of maximum and actually manipulative, European perspective. This side of the sword, mentioned in the above metaphor, would cut this propagandistic utopia of European integrations to the bone, because it conceals a different reality – a transatlantic state engineering serving for the US geopolitical purposes. The other side of this double-edged sword, as many times before in the recent BiH history, is pointed at the life itself.

The EU orientation towards its major inner issues may, in the near future, provoke quite an erroneous reaction of its decision makers in the field of foreign and security policy when it comes to BiH. The awareness that, due to dealing with its internal issues, the EU can no longer pay so much attention to and invest its energy and patience in Bosnia...may cause not so rare politicians’ delusion that the process (BiH centralisation) can be and should be accelerated so that the issue itself would be resolved as soon as possible. Although this is the style of conducting foreign affairs policy which is more characteristic for the Americans than for the Europeans, the former have been present in BiH for so long and they have left such a significant mark that it would be no wonder if the European decision makers should try and imitate their transatlantic role models. All the more so because the decision on acceleration would not be made without the American influence which might be even crucial. A thing like that would jeopardise the Dayton Agreement itself without even trying to find an adequate substitute for it. Politically speaking, we would find ourselves in a pre-Dayton situation in which, like in 1992, the EU would be completely pushed out of the game, and the USA would regain sole control of the situation. It would really signify the end of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, what is even less important, of any EU role in this state“.⁷

Although the scenario of “the other side of the double-edged sword“, to quote Professor Samardžić, should not be excluded when discussing different options for BiH political future influenced by the Western countries, the extreme version of such an outcome of events on the political scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina probably does not take much chance, when we take

⁷ Slobodan Samardžić, „Republika Srpska – Vitalnost opstanka u okruženju evropskih integracija“ (Republic of Srpska – Vitality of Survival in the European Integrations Environment), *Nova srpska politička misao – Petnaest godina Dejtonskog sporazuma i budućnost Republike Srpske (New Serbian Political Thought - Fifteenth Anniversary of the Dayton Agreement and the Future of the Republic of Srpska)*, Đorđe Vukadinović (ur.), Nova srpska politička misao, Beograd, 2011, str. 205-206.

into consideration the policy of the European Union (and the United States as well) towards BiH over the past decade. Namely, although various pressures for the purpose of introducing reforms that would, allegedly, contribute to a more functional system and would essentially result only in additional centralisation of the state, have been continuously persisting since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, yet, it appears that institutional and non-institutional violence, primarily used by the High Representatives Wolfgang Petritsch and Paddy Ashdown, has not been implemented for years now in the manner it was done in the first post-war decade in BiH. Naturally, this does not mean that the political position of the West towards the "Bosnian issue", formed during the 1990s war, was changed in any other way, but it rather means that Western Europe, to which the United States in the recent period has left the patronage over Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been, to a great extent, overwhelmed with its internal problems that it is not able to resolve (and, according to all available indicators, it won't be able to resolve in any near future) and it has neither the energy nor the will and resources available to excessively deal with this peripheral and, seemingly, insoluble issues such as dysfunctionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political system. In the age of struggle against the Islamic State and generally chaotic security situation in the Middle East and Northern Africa, a smouldering conflict between the West and Russia, and China's and other Asian countries' unstoppable economic growth, it is highly unlikely that the USA and EU would decide to invest their time, money and energy much needed for engaging into a political offensive that would result in some new international conference, i.e. Dayton 2, at which drastic changes of BiH political system would be introduced.

One can surely presume that at least a partial reason for the lack of "will" of the European officials is also consequential to the devastating results of their twenty-year policy in BiH. Overstaffed and inefficient administration, constant political crisis, divided society in addition to the devastating development indicators in all areas, clearly show how "efficient" the solutions of Western institutions and their representatives were. Regardless of that, it is quite clear that even forced centralisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, quite logically, could not represent the solution for its accumulated problems. If, hypothetically speaking, such initiative would actually occur, it would only trigger a new (and further) situation destabilisation in BiH and deterioration of the interethnic relations with inconceivable consequences to the security and future of the so-called Western Balkans that would, likewise, have adverse effect on the stability of the European Union itself. Western European experts in Balkan politics and ethnic relations are quite aware of all this, and many of them surely do not believe in the applicability and sustainability of the idea of the "civic state of Bosnia and Herzegovina" in which national and religious affiliation would, assumingly, lose any importance. Those who may have once believed in this political nonsense were in for quite of a shock coming from their own countries that are now facing total failure – collapse of the (Western) idea of the so-called multiethnic society that in Western Europe is, inter alia, manifested by an alarming increase in the popularity of the Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, which became the biggest threats to the European security, and the occurrence of the army of Western Muslims fighting for the Islamic State. Such a situation is already causing the rise of right-wing political parties across Western Europe which may, again, have long-term implications to its Balkan policy, and thus to BiH, considering the fact that right-wing political leaders mainly distrust utopistic projects of multiethnic states and that they are not fascinated by the melting pot

phenomenon that, officially, was to be the idea lying behind the Dayton Agreement. The positioning of the rising right on the political scene of Western Europe would, in the years to come, certainly affect the European foreign policy that, if the right parties come to power in some EU countries, might suffer some drastic changes.

The future of the relations between the USA and EU, on the one side, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other, will be unquestionably and predominantly determined by the trends in international relations that will set up the American and Western European foreign policy priorities. Although international policy is a dynamic discipline whose future is difficult to foresee to the very details, the scenario according to which Bosnia and Herzegovina would suddenly come to the top of the North American and Western European list of priorities any time soon seems to be quite far-fetched from the current perspective. Naturally, this does not mean that BiH and particularly the Republic of Srpska will not be subject to any pressures in the time to come; quite the opposite, those pressures, in their different forms, have been present ever since Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed independence and it would be naive to conclude that they would simply disappear any time soon, as the USA and EU will more and more focus on their own issues and other hotspots worldwide. In the forthcoming period, the United States of America and the European Union will most likely insist on introducing the amendments to BiH Constitution for the purpose of implementing the ruling in the matter of Sejdic-Finci, and also for the purpose of the state assuming certain responsibilities for entering into international agreements with the EU and the NATO. Furthermore, in the view of the change in the priorities of the Western foreign policy, there is another fact to be considered. The US establishment is not quite unanimous when it comes to the policy shaping process and setting up political goals; the Senate, the House of Representatives, the White House, the Pentagon, various national security institutions and non-governmental organisations often appear as independent stakeholders driven by their own logic and needs.⁸ In a country as unstable and weak as Bosnia and Herzegovina, these different influences, particularly in a situation in which the Balkan region is no more the priority subject of interest of coordinated American top-level politics, are likely to further destabilise fragile political structures and obstruct BiH institutional development.

Different local and international, governmental and non-governmental organisations, foundations, parties and individuals will continue, as they have so far, to propose different “solutions“ for the alleged transformation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into a “normal state“; simultaneously, the attempts of institutional blockade, creating division between the nations, entities, cantons, different social and political groups and organisations will be also resumed, all aimed at drawing attention of the international community (particularly its

⁸ Misa Đurković, „Elementi spoljnopolitičkog položaja Republike Srpske“ (The Elements of Foreign Policy Position of the Republic of Srpska), *Zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa: Republika Srbija i Republika Srpska – Stari i novi politički izazovi (A Collection of Works from the Scientific Convention: Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska – Old and New Political Challenges)*, Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Fakultet političkih nauka u Banjoj Luci i Predstavništvo Republike Srpske u Srbiji, Beograd, 2014, str. 137.

Western part) and implementing political and national goals of some of the constituent nations.⁹

General mobilisation of the American and European administration in order to carry out a dramatic revision of the Dayton Agreement in some new international conference, regardless of whether it would mean the abolition of entities and the creation of a centralised (Bosniak) state, or increasing BiH complexity by adding the third, Croatian entity, seems highly unlikely at this moment. The entire Western world has a handful of hot issues to tackle, starting from the economic crisis to the energy security issues, the conflict with Russia, terrorism and unstable security situation in the great part of the Muslim world, uncontrolled migrations and the increasing economic growth of non-Western states led by China. In such circumstances, Bosnia and Herzegovina, although not completely forgotten, quite certainly is not, nor will it be in any near (and probably far) future, on the top of the priority list of any influential Western state. Whether such sequence of events will result in the sobering of local politicians and the creation of a minimum consensus that would consider the legitimate rights and needs of all constituent nations, so that the state would be at least given a chance to survive for a longer period of time, or will Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to sink into the abyss of interethnic antagonisms and selfish, megalomaniacal political ambitions, remains to be seen in the years to come.

CULTURAL CLOSENESS AND GEO-STRATEGIC INTERESTS – THE POLICY OF RUSSIA, VATICAN, GERMANY AND TURKEY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Dynamic trends in international relations in the previous period caused the countries who did not have a key influence on the drafting of the Dayton Agreement and the formation of BiH state as it is today, to have the more important role on the political scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina, both due to their political and economic power and interest, and cultural closeness they share with local constituent nations. The Orthodox religion and strong cultural and historical ties primarily influenced the Republic of Srpska and its ruling elite to create political and economic ties with the Russian Federation that, within its possibilities and for some time now, has been defending the position of the Serbian nation and its entity guaranteed by the Dayton Agreement. The Republic of Srpska and Russia, in addition to their cultural closeness, also share interests when it comes to confronting the policy of the Western centres of power that represent a threat to both countries. Although Russia is not as strong as the Serbs would like it to be, its influence is much

⁹ One of the interesting examples is also the activity of the International Crisis Group regarding this issue. This “non-governmental organisation” in which, among others, some of the former Western officials who actively participated in the missions in former SFRY were and are engaged, on several occasions since the recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina offered its final solutions for the alleged stabilisation of political situation in this country. Those “solutions” ranged from the proposal of a centralised, unitary state to the last idea proposed in 2014 that would imply the creation of the third entity - the Croatian one. Reference: A. Macanović and D. R. Djordjević, „Međunarodna krizna grupa: Bosna kao Federacija” (Bosnia as a Federation), *Vecernje novosti*, July 30, 2014 <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/politika/aktuelno.289.html:503215-Medjunarodna-krizna-grupa-Bosna-kao-federacija>.

bigger and more beneficial than it was in 1990s. The Russian factor has returned to the Balkans through the economy first, and the Republic of Srpska was among the first ones who recognised it and opened its door to let them in. Excellent relations between the RS political leadership and some important segments of the Russian administration, such as the Foreign Affairs Ministry, are the result of such a prudent decision. It is very important that the Republic of Srpska has its representative office in Moscow, and that it is working on the opening of other channels to intensify the ties between Banja Luka and various Russian stakeholders. Therefore, Russia gives its explicit support to the Republic of Srpska, both political and economic one, and although such support itself is not sufficient for full protection, in combination with other stakeholders' activities it can become quite important for the improvement of its position.¹⁰ Economic ties are the most important guarantee of a good political cooperation, so the potential growth of Russian investments in the Republic of Srpska will quite certainly affect the establishment of tighter political ties between the Russian Federation and the Serbian entity. The direction in which the relations develop between Washington, Berlin and Moscow, on the one hand, and the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, shall also influence Serbian and Russian relations within the wider framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the other hand, Catholic Croats in BiH always counted on Vatican and also Germany whose Balkan policy, in addition to supporting the US political decisions, is also based on the protection of the special, Croatian interest. During the entire breakup of Yugoslavia Vatican played an active role in this region, and this role still exists today in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely, in the form of the support to the Croatian people. Similarly, Germany that has an important role in the EU enlargement has always demonstrated a special kind of sensitivity when it comes to the Croatian issue. After Croatia joined the EU, the activities of the Croatian delegates in the European Parliament, aimed at strengthening the political position of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were intensified, as it was expected, and considering the fact that the most influential political leaders of the Croatian people in BiH advocate the idea of the third entity formation, it remains to be seen in what way this idea will be developed in the future and whether the Croats will obtain the support of their traditional European allies in achieving this goal and how big that support will be.

Another state that also has an important geo-strategic and political interest in the Balkans and, therefore, in Bosnia and Herzegovina alike, in addition to its cultural ties with the Muslim community, is Turkey that has been expressing great interest in expanding its influence in the Balkan Peninsula particularly over the past few years. Turkish policy has been consistently active and aimed at uniting all the Muslims in this part of Europe and strengthening their and, through that, its own political influence in the Balkans.¹¹ In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the breakup of former

¹⁰ Misa Đurković, „Elementi spoljnopolitičkog položaja Republike Srpske” (The Elements of Foreign Policy Position of the Republic of Srpska Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Fakultet političkih nauka u Banjoj Luci i Predstavništvo Republike Srpske u Srbiji, Beograd, 2014, str. 137.

¹¹ For more information please refer to: Darko Tanaskovic, *Neoosmanizam: Povratak Turske na Balkan (Neoosmanism: Turkey's Return to the Balkans)*, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2010.

SFRY, Turkey has openly and explicitly supported the Bosniak national community advocating the state centralisation that would considerably diminish and, finally, utterly marginalise the political influence of the Serbs and Croats on the state union. The contacts of the Turkish political and religious officials with the Bosniak officials in BiH have been numerous and intensive, as well as the cooperation in all aspects, whereas the Turkish influence has been highly welcomed by the local Muslim population. When speaking of the Turkish role in BiH politics, one should keep in mind the fact that the current ruling party in Turkey, headed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for several years now has been diligently working on the re-Islamisation of this (officially) only secular Muslim state in the world, and also the fact that the Turkish authorities have quite a benevolent attitude towards the biggest modern terrorist organisation – the Islamic State. Taking all this into consideration, it becomes obvious how great the political and cultural role of this huge and strong Muslim country can be in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the restoration of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans at this point does not seem to be a realistic political option, the Turkish influence on the Bosniak community in BiH should by no means be underestimated, as well as the fact that the potential increase of this influence would quite certainly encounter the resistance of the Christian, i.e. Serbian and Croatian part of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thus cause destabilisation of its already fragile institutions.

What should also be stressed is the fact that all of the above listed countries have different views when it comes to their mutual political relations in BiH, which only adds up to already complicated situation in this complex state. Turkish policy in BiH has been supported to some extent by the American and British establishment,¹² which disgruntles Germany that wants to have a decisive influence on the Balkans and whose presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, among other things, through the work of its diplomats and various foundations such as “Konrad Adenauer“ is quite prominent and conspicuous. On the other hand, the Russian impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that is Republic of Srpska, is not appreciated by any of the above mentioned states and, like in Serbia, the issue of preventing the spread of the Russian influence in the Balkans is one of the essential foreign policy objectives of the Western states’ Balkan policy, which will surely continue in the future.

CONCLUSION

Ever since it proclaimed its independence Bosnia and Herzegovina never actually had inner capacity to function on its own, and it is highly unlikely that something is going to change in that respect any time soon. A divided society, confronted goals of the nations and their political elite in addition to the lack of consensus regarding the majority of issues relevant for the country’s future, chronically shake and destabilise already fragile institutions in BiH. In such circumstances, Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes

¹² There is a widespread opinion that the USA and their closes ally United Kingdom still trade on keeping the traditional Balkan conflicts open, which actually does represent the biggest reason for their support to the Turkish influence in BiH. The influence of a large Asian and Muslim state such as Turkey in predominantly Christian European region whose states already are EU members or about to become such, can quite logically be observed only as a factor of further destabilisation in this region.

(even) more dependent on the international community than any other (weak) Balkan state. International community headed by the High Representative has been, in fact, keeping the situation “under control“ all the time in this chaotic state and, actually, has been preventing its breakup from its very creation.

The same as it did in the past, the future of BiH will greatly depend on the constellation of power and relations in international policy that change rapidly. Namely, over the past few decades’ major changes started to occur on the global political scene and such trend is likely to be continued. The decline of American power, China’s and other non-Western countries’ economic growth, Russia’s return to the international political scene as well as the crisis within the EU, altogether contribute to the creation of the multipolar world that already implies, and in the future it will continue to imply, the division of power among several regional and world powers, instead of absolute domination of a single superpower.

At the same time, international political scene became very unstable especially over the past few years, and it is difficult to draw any conclusions even regarding the near future. Terrorism and other threats to security, economic crisis, climate changes and major migrations will certainly contribute to the further changes in international policy and relations.

Such situation development will, on the one hand, “put an ace in the hands“of some small countries and nations that will be provided with more options in their political decision making process. As far as Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned, however, it is difficult to predict in what way the (future) trends in international relations will affect its weak political and institutional structures. The shift in the focus of interest of the Western states, that had and still have a key role in BiH, from the Balkans to some other geographic regions, will quite certainly give more freedom and flexibility to the local political leaders. Moreover, such trend would certainly give room to the political action of some other countries that show certain interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the influence which might deepen the existing internal problems in BiH and provoke additional instability, considering the fact that there is no major and powerful state equally appreciated by all three constituent nations – but rather quite opposite, the countries that are close to one of the nations in terms of culture and politics are mainly regarded as unwanted, or even hostile, by the other two nations that see them as a threat. Various international non-governmental organisations will also, in the future, seek their place on the complex political scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in addition to the political entities that are lobbying, within some state administrations, such as the USA, for a certain cause.

Such a situation makes it difficult to foresee the sequence of events in BiH in the years to come. Bearing in mind both recent and distant history of this turbulent region, forecasting is quite a thankless task, not to mention, an impossible one. However, one thing is absolutely certain. In the view of the deep internal divisions and utter failure to build a joint political identity of the state and its citizens, one could not help but wonder whether members of the local political elite will be able to demonstrate much needed political maturity and responsibility, regardless of the dynamic trends in international relations, abandon their megalomaniacal goals and, instead, make an effort to build a functional state on their own that will satisfy the needs and interests of all constituent nations.

**BUDUĆNOST BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE U SVETLU PROMENA NA
MEĐUNARODNOJ POLITIČKOJ SCENI**

Dr Jelena Vukoičić

Apstrakt: Iako je od završetka građanskog rata u Bosni i Hercegovini prošlo već gotovo dve decenije, politička situacija i odnosi u ovoj državi su, i dalje, veoma složeni, što destabilizuje situaciju i sprečava uspostavljanje stabilnog i održivog političkog sistema. Na čitavom prostoru BiH dominira isključiva nacionalna politika, što onemogućava integraciju institucija na različitim nivoima i limitira kapacitet za donošenje političkih reformi. S obzirom na nepostojanje unutrašnjeg konsenzusa oko velikog broja važnih pitanja, BiH je i dalje potpuno zavisna od međunarodnih institucija koje praktično i odlučuju o sudbini ove države. Iz ovog razloga, kretanja u međunarodnim odnosima i ravnoteža snaga u svetskoj politici utiču na Bosnu i Hercegovinu više nego na druge zemlje u regionu. S obzirom na velike promene koje su zahvatile međunarodnu političku scenu i koje će sve više doprinostiti stvaranju multipolarnog sveta, BiH neizostavno očekuje neizvesna budućnost koja će, u velikoj meri, zavisiti od ravnoteže snaga u međunarodnim odnosima.

Ključne reči: *Bosna i Hercegovina, međunarodni odnosi, Dejtonski sporazum, politički odnosi u BiH, međunarodna politička scena.*

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