

KOSOVO AND METOHIJA – THE SECURITY CHALLENGE AND/OR PERSPECTIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

– *EDITOR'S WORD* –

The Kosovo-Metohija security knot represents the starting and ending point of the current and certainly future dilemma on the issue of the national security of the Republic of Serbia, and also of the Serbian nation as a whole. The geopolitical, foreign policy, strategic, identity and security aspects of the Kosovo-Metohija security dilemma are the focus of the scientific research effort of the Strategic Research Institute of the University of Defence. Namely, the Institute, with its scientific and research capacities, makes efforts to contribute to the recognition of the security aspects of this pressing national issue. Furthermore, it tends to contribute to the rational and constructive resolution of security risks and threats, as well as to make a possible response and framework of preventive and long-term action according to possible forms of security threats, which may arise or escalate from the Kosovo-Metohija security issue.

Precisely due to this, the scientific conference entitled “Kosovo and Metohija – the security challenge and/or perspective of the Republic of Serbia” was held in December 2021, organized by the Strategic Research Institute. The main idea was to discuss the key security challenges and possible perspectives of the Kosovo-Metohija problem with the participation of competent scientific workers from the academic community. The research focus of the scientific conference was to do an objective assessment of the security situation in Kosovo and Metohija, with consideration of the impact of changed geopolitical relations, inherited relations and the potential for confrontation. The set goal of the conference, which gathered more than thirty participants from renowned scientific research and higher education institutions of the Republic of Serbia, was to contribute to making solutions that would lead to the framework of establishing the Balkans as a zone of stability and opening room for the development perspective of Serbia and the region.

On the pages of this issue of *Vojno delo*, there are selected papers, which were written as a result of the research effort of the authors who participated in the conference. In a very demanding selection, in this special issue there are papers that deal with some aspects of geopolitics, geoeconomics, strategy, as well as consideration of the attitudes of certain great powers and the possible commitment of the Republic of Serbia to them in accordance with their interests.

The extremism of the ethnic and religious perception in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija and consequences it produces, as a disruptive factor to the conflict resolution process, occupies the central part of this thematic issue. The parallels of the genesis, actions and achieved goals of some extremist and secessionist movements, as well as the correlation and consequences of Islamic extremism for security in Kosovo and Metohija, and thus in the Republic of Serbia, have also been discussed.

It is certainly important that the effort regarding the attempt to establish a permanent, stable and sustainable solution to the Kosovo-Metohija security issue is based on the redefinition of the relationship between the two nations, Serbs and Albanians. The aspiration to establish redefined relations on the basis of appreciation and the need for future common life implies calming tensions and stopping the movement in the direction of absolute antagonism and the absence of relations between Serbs and Albanians in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a wide range of instruments of soft power that will promote overcoming misunderstanding in the Serbian-Albanian relations, as well as special, active channels of communication, which will contribute to the Kosovo-Metohija security problem not becoming permanently defined as a "frozen conflict".

It should be emphasized that all authors have expressed their vision in the papers, with an undoubted desire to contribute to the resolution of this complex centuries-old conflict. Therefore, it is suggested to the reader to approach the presented papers with an open mind, with confidence in the constructive and good intention of the author. Without the ambition that this special issue of our journal will offer key solutions in overcoming the security problem of Kosovo and Metohija, we believe that, with a creative and engaged approach of the academic community, it is possible to contribute to this issue not being a challenge, but a perspective for the security of the Republic of Serbia.

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