

“Serbia will Never Join NATO”

200 intellectuals want referendum on NATO

By [Global Research](#)

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BELGRADE — A group of 200 intellectuals have asked the Serbian parliament to call a referendum on the country’s possible future NATO membership.

“Serbia has many times, from the world’s most important podiums, said it will ‘never recognize an independent state of Kosovo’, and that means that Serbia will never join NATO.”

“The ‘independent Kosovo’ is NATO’s doing, it created this phony state and gave itself supreme and unchallenged powers [there],” the group said in its request, read during a news conference in Belgrade this Monday by author and member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) Matija Bećković.

The letter adds that a “militarily neutral Serbia, true to herself and her own traditions, is no exception”.

“Serbia also has another reason [not to join], that no other country has, and that is the criminal NATO bombing and destruction of Serbia and her people, while trampling on sacrosanct norms of international law. That reason has not been produced from times immemorial, nor is some other NATO, rather than this one, responsible for that crime,” the intellectuals wrote, in reference to the 1999 attacks the Western military alliance staged against then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ).

This is a reason that the Serb people cannot ignore, without ignoring their own memory and their own dignity, the intellectuals further said.

Bećković said that while Serbia’s NATO membership is “discussed in every family in the country”, there is fear that this could be done behind citizens’ backs and behind closed doors.

“If that is not the case, all the better, but, once bitten, twice shy. It would not be a first for some institution to solve an issue of common importance. This question is such that no one party, government, or even parliament can solve. No nation would hand an issue of this kind over to someone else,” he said.

Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS) President Ljiljana Smajlović, who signed the document on her own behalf, said there is a general national consensus about Serbia’s NATO membership, and that is not visible because of otherwise deep political divisions.

“That consensus does not favor Serbia’s NATO membership, and we are asking that the

citizens be given an opportunity to express this consensus in a referendum.”

She reminded that NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen was quoted as saying that “Serbia needs a debate” on joining the alliance.

“Defense Minister Dragan Šutanovac says that the best answer about Serbia’s NATO membership would be provided by the business and security people and that the real issue is whether it’s best to have real estate worth more or less. High real estate prices are favorable to those who have lots of real estate. There is this manner of the people in power in Serbia to start off from whatever suits those who have a lot,” Smajlović said.

She pointed out that “whether real estate prices will go up or down” is not Serbia’s major issue.

Member of the Council of the Broadcasting Agency Svetozar Stojanović, who signed the document as a private citizen, also took part in the news conference today and reminded that Serbian citizens’ will regarding the country’s military neutrality was expressed only indirectly through parliament, which adopted a declaration to that end.

“It’s surprising that people in power are making statements which are contrary to the parliamentary declaration,” Stojanović commented, and added that he believed Serbians would say no to NATO membership if given a chance in a referendum.

The document was, among others, signed by former PM Vojislav Koštunica, film director Emir Kusturica, SPC Metropolitan Amfilohije, Bishop Atanasije, and former Interior Minister Dušan Mihajlović.

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